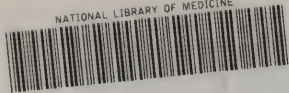
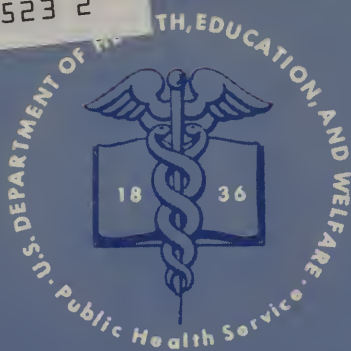




NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 00560523 2



**NATIONAL  
LIBRARY  
OF  
MEDICINE**  
Washington, D.C.

RETURN TO  
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE  
BEFORE LAST DATE SHOWN

SEP 20 1919  
SEP 20 1976



AM I A LUNATIC?

OR,

DR. HENRY T. HELMBOLD'S EXPOSURE

OF HIS

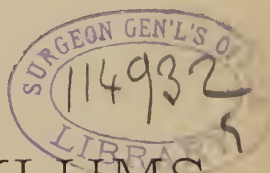
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

IN THE

LUNATIC ASYLUMS

OF

EUROPE AND AMERICA.



WM

H478a

1877



# DR. HELMBOLD'S EXPERIENCES

IN THE

## LUNATIC ASYLUMS OF EUROPE AND AMERICA.

---

NEW YORK, 1877.

As I have been prominently before the public, and as the public take a great interest in the subject of Lunatic Asylums—in several of which, in this country and France, I have been confined—I desire to furnish you with a story of my adventures in these places, for publication. It would, I think, alike “amuse, startle, and instruct.” The narrative is strictly true in every important particular, and the manuscript I hereby offer to my former Secretary.

Your obedient servant,

H. T. HELMBOLD.







## PREFACE.



**F**OR twenty years I have been before the world. My name, for ten years at least, has been “familiar as a household word” to all who read the newspapers. I confess that I have been desirous of seeing my name in print, and my wish has been abundantly gratified. I have paid liberally for the gratification. Some become famous by leading armies, or governing States, or writing books; I became famous by spending money. It cost me about three million and a half of dollars to make H. T. Helmholtz known.

Yet, with all my notoriety, I have been on several occasions torn from my home and my family, taken forcibly from my business, deprived forcibly of my pleasures, and with as little excuse and ceremony as though I had never been heard

of, and had not a dollar—and all on the charge, under the pretence, of being crazy.

And what has happened to me has happened to others—may happen at any time to any one. In fact, it is much more likely to happen to the rich than to the poor—to the well-known than to the obscure. No one has an interest in the insanity of a poor man—of an obscure man. He may beg, or borrow, or steal along unnoticed through a dull life. But if a man has made money, or controls it—if a man has a stake in the community and exerts a positive influence in it—then, as a matter of course, there must be parties whose interest it is to get him out of the way; and what place so convenient for “out of the way” purposes as a madhouse? It is almost equal in this respect to the grave.

I have, so far as I am personally concerned, no charges to bring directly against anybody. I am willing to assume, if necessary, that everybody concerned in my affairs has acted conscientiously, according to their best lights. But this I do, this I will, this I must, say: I do not think that I am crazy—I do not think that I have ever been crazy. I have been erratic sometimes, perhaps, excitable always, but never, I think, insane. On this point, however, I will leave the readers of the following narrative to form their own judgment. Two most important points, however, are certain:

*First.* I was never thoroughly examined as to my mental

condition by the different parties who took the responsibility of consigning me to the different madhouses.

*Second.* When in the madhouses I was not treated as I deserved. In some of these institutions I was treated as if I was not mad at all. In others I was treated as if I was a raving madman.

*Lastly.* And this is where the public interest “comes in” —my experience in lunatic asylums should serve as a revelation to those who consider themselves sane ; it should show them how difficult it is to really discriminate between sanity and insanity, between eccentricity and madness. It will show how easy it is to find men, even medical men, who will pronounce any one insane ; it will show how difficult it is to prove that one is not really crazy ; it will show what madhouses are, and how infinitely worse and viler they are in this country than they are in Europe ; it will show how readily any man can be thrown into one of these places, and how difficult it is for any man to escape from them.

In showing all this, I will first show myself, to a certain extent, a public benefactor, and I hope and believe that, in the course of my narrative, I will also succeed in exciting interest and enlisting sympathy in the strange, startling, and instructive adventures and experiences of

H. T. HELMBOLD,





# AM I A LUNATIC?

---

## CHAPTER I.

I COMMIT SUICIDE (THROUGH THE NEWSPAPERS), AND  
THEN AM SENT TO PRISON (BY THE AUTHORITIES).



SHOT myself in the month of July, 1871 ;  
I really forget the precise day of the month,  
but it was one day in July.

It happened in this wise : I felt inclined  
to have a little sport, and early one morning I took  
my landau and my colored coachman and my gun,  
and we all started for the beach at Long Branch  
together.

My family were then at my seaside cottage for the  
summer, and it only occupied a very few moments to  
ride in my carriage from my residence to the bluffs,  
and then along the bluffs to the Metropolitan Hotel.

Reaching the hotel grounds, I alighted, and, with my gun in my hand, strolled along the shore. Seeing some beach birds, I aimed at them and fired. My gun "kicked" violently, I fell to the ground, crying, "I am shot," as I at first really thought I was.

I recovered my scattered senses, and, examining myself, found that I had been stunned, not injured. I called my coachman, sprang into my carriage, and explained to one or two acquaintances whom I met what the matter was, and thought no more of the affair.

I ascertained on investigation subsequently that my friend, Mr. Allen, of the Arcade Hotel, had overloaded my gun, the surplus powder and wadding causing the mischief. But the real mischief of the matter lay in the false report of my suicide, which report was at once sent to the New York evening papers by some ill-informed or malicious person at Long Branch.

I said nothing to my wife or children of the accident, and that afternoon I drove out with my family in my four-in-hand. Judge of my surprise when I read in one of the evening papers, which had come upon the last boat from the city, that I had killed myself.

My friends, of course, were amused, and the people at the seaside thought it was a huge joke. But it proved no joke to me; I felt its evil effects at once and for many a day after.

All the papers next day teemed with sensational accounts of my self-destruction. One reliable journal described my suicide in one way, another journal, equally reliable, described it in another and wholly different fashion. According to one paper I was still lingering in the agonies of death ; according to another I had died ; the journal in the West stated that I shot myself in the head ; a paper down East informed its readers that I had sent a bullet through my heart ; one rural journal about a week afterward was sent to me, in which it was affirmed that one side of my face was completely blown off.

Of course I denied these reports by mail, by telegraph, by word of mouth. Of course I went the next morning to New York and had the accounts contradicted. But everybody knows, at least I do, that a lie can travel a good many miles before the truth can even get its boots on, and so to all intents and purposes, in many quarters, I, though living and in perfect health, was dead.

My wife—my supposed widow—received many telegrams of sympathy and condolence, but, alas ! my clerks and confidential men at my stores received likewise many business messages which were not at all consolatory. In short, my reported suicide did me, in a very little while, a very great commercial injury.

And even when, by dint of hard work, it became

known that I was still in the land of the living, the false rumors concerning me resulted greatly to my detriment, for it began to be hinted mysteriously, then repeated openly in print, that, although I was not dead, I was not sane ; that troubles of various kinds had affected my mind ; that I was no longer the active, energetic, clear-headed man of business, but a nervous and erratic—if not positively demented—invalid. I could trace this rumor to no definite source ; I laughed at it, I remonstrated against it, but I could not dispel it. My customers began to fear that I was no longer capable of controlling my business, that my medicines would no longer have the advantage of my personal supervision, and so the orders for my goods rapidly fell off, and my trade dwindled to comparatively small proportions.

All this naturally preyed upon my mind ; I partook more freely than my wont of stimulants ; I overworked myself, mind and body ; I was in a state of nervous fever ; I felt that, for the first time in my life, I was going to be seriously sick.

At this juncture my family-physician insisted upon change of scene for me ; travel and rest would cure me, otherwise I must die. I heeded my medical adviser, and made my arrangements for a two or three months' trip across the Atlantic.

It was provided that my wife and three boys would accompany me, the family taking a permanent abode



in Dresden, Saxony, where my boys were to be educated, under their mother's care. I would accompany them to Dresden, would then visit Paris and London, returning home before the spring. So, arranging my affairs, placing my business in the hands of my confidential clerks, leaving a still profitable trade in their hands, and a moderate bank-account, I departed on the steamer *Algeria*, on the 8th of December, 1871.

We reached London after a swift passage, stayed three days at the Langham Hotel, then crossed the Channel, and arrived in Paris, stopping at the Hôtel d'Athène, Rue Scribe.

Horace says that we can, by travel, change the sky, but not the mind, or words to that effect, and Horace is right. Though thousands of miles removed from it, my business was ever in and on my mind. When I reached Paris I found a number of telegrams (cablegrams) from New York and Philadelphia awaiting me. These cablegrams were of the most contradictory character, and would have thrown any mind, however well-balanced, into confusion. They were conflicting enough to drive a sane man crazy. One advised me in the most urgent terms to come to New York at once, that a fortnight's longer absence from my business would make me a beggar. Another assured me that all was doing well, and that I ought not to think of returning until my health

was thoroughly restored. One cablegram told me I was being robbed right and left, and that nothing but my personal presence could straighten matters. A fourth despatch stated that my business was more prosperous at that moment than it had been for years.

I read and reread these conflicting despatches till my head ached, then I went to bed and passed a sleepless night. In the morning I rose early and thought clearly; my mind was made up—I would return to America, leaving my family to go to Dresden without me.

I announced my intention to my wife, who in vain endeavored to dissuade me. Arguing with her, I became excited and drank freely. During the day numbers of my friends and acquaintances—French and Americans—called upon me at the hotel, and kept my mind in a continual whirl.

Among others, a young American lawyer—a man whom I very much disliked, but who had for years, in America, intruded upon me with his unwelcome suggestions—called, and made himself especially obnoxious by persistently advising me all day long not to return to New York. I lost my temper at last, and told the man to mind his own business, but I suppose that he had so little of that to mind that it really would not occupy his energies; so he annoyed me to such an extent that I ordered him out

of the hotel, and he refused to go. Then, though a little man, I rose to put him out—ay, and I meant to do it; but he resisted, taunted me, and obtained the ear of the landlord, who, instead of remonstrating with *him*, found fault with *me*!

This was too much for human endurance. So I called for brandy, then for champagne, and what with my troubles, and my nervousness, and my liquors, I suppose I must have forgotten the proprieties, and afforded my enemies, by my imprudence, the very opportunity they wanted.

All I remember of the rest of my second evening in Paris is a terrible headache; a desperate struggle—in the presence of several ladies—with several men; a futile attempt on my part to break the head of the officious young lawyer; the appearance of the landlord with the *gendarmes*; my arrest, and a grateful rush of cold air against my face as I was hurried to a cell by the officers of the law.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE FRENCH POLICE AND THE AMERICAN MINISTER.

**M**Y prison was not very far from my hotel, and my cell itself was about as comfortable as a hall bedroom at an average New York boarding-house; the wooden floor was clean, and the appointments were decent. All this I discovered the next morning when I had sobered somewhat. But what a night I passed through before I reached that morning!

I know not what the lost may suffer, but for hours I was in torment. I was wretched in body; every bone ached, every muscle seemed wrenched and strained; my nerves were in a whirl, my brain was on fire; and to all my physical anguish were added the pangs of wounded pride when I thought of my ignominious condition, and supplemented by the most poignant anxiety in regard to my business matters across the Atlantic.

I have never been delirious in all my life; but I

came nearer to delirium that night in a Paris prison than ever before or since. For a while I surrendered myself to despair. I beat my head against the wall ; had I been able to command the fatal services of pistol, rope, or poison, I verily believe I would have terminated my miserable existence.

But the blessed daylight found me a calmer man. I was taken to the Prefect of Police, who luckily spoke English, though imperfectly. I contrived to make him understand that I protested against the charge of disorderly conduct, but that I confessed that I had unwittingly misbehaved myself owing to my mental excitement and business perplexities ; I also stated to the official that I was an American citizen, and requested the interposition of Mr. Washburne, the American Minister. I was accordingly sent to Mr. Washburne under the care of an officer.

I found the famous minister hard at work at his office though it was yet early in the day. I explained my matter to Mr. Washburne rapidly, and, perhaps, somewhat excitedly. He listened attentively, and then soothingly suggested that I should go out with one of his *attachés* and take some breakfast. I felt hungry, thanked him, and complied with his suggestion. I ate heartily, and on my return to the Minister's found two grave-looking persons closeted with him. I was at once introduced to these grave personages, and found that they were physicians,

celebrated French physicians, I was told ; but famous as they were they could not speak a word of English, and famous as I was I could not speak a word of French, so how on earth we contrived to understand each other I do not know ; but they chattered to me, and looked at me, and then chattered to each other, and looked at each other, and then they signed some papers, and said something to Minister Washburne, who said something to them ; and then the grave-looking personages shook hands with Minister Washburne and departed.

Then my wife called upon me, accompanied by my children's governess, who could talk French fluently, and who conversed quite sociably with several Frenchmen. I was, of course, glad to see my wife ; but I noticed that she and Minister Washburne had a mysterious little talk together, in the course of which he showed to her the papers which the French physicians had just signed.

I noticed, too, and with decided displeasure, that the intermeddling lawyer who had so annoyed me at the hotel the day before now entered the minister's office, and proceeded to converse with him and my wife in a low tone. As they did not seem to wish me to hear what they were saying, and as I am naturally an easy-going man, and have always believed in the philosophical maxim of letting a woman have her own way—as she will have it any way—I did not at

first intrude upon my wife's party and privacy. But when I saw her, in her turn, show to this confounded, intermeddling fool of a lawyer the mysterious papers which the French doctors had just signed, then I began to think that I, too, would have a look at these documents.

But just as I approached the group with this intention, Minister Washburne stepped forward and suggested that I needed rest and recreation a while, that my case was all settled, that he would take care of my family, and that I had better jump into a carriage which was waiting, and, accompanied by some of his people, take a ride.

I hailed the idea of a ride with alacrity. I wanted fresh air. I needed the sense of rapid motion. I leaped into the carriage, which drove off rapidly—whither I knew not, but I was soon to know.





## CHAPTER III.

### A CARRIAGE-RIDE AND A FOOT-RACE.

**I**N the carriage I found a young man—a relative of the minister's—to whom I had been previously introduced. He entered at once into a general conversation with me.

We rode to Neuilly, about three miles from Paris, in the vicinity of the Bois de Boulogne. It was a lovely day in holiday week, between Christmas and the great Paris festival, New Year's day. I remarked to my companion that it was glorious Christmas weather. He agreed with me.

I noticed that he agreed with me in everything I said. He never contradicted me—never pretended to argue with me. Once I contradicted myself. He took no notice whatever of the contradiction. He seemed to treat me as Polonius did Hamlet—he humored me to the top of my bent.

Suddenly the carriage stopped at a place surrounded with a strong, high wall. I looked at the wall ; then



I looked at my companion ; then I thought of those mysterious French doctors, and those mysterious papers which they signed, and my wife's mysterious conversations with that confounded lawyer, and Minister Washburne's soothing ways. I had read of madhouses. Like an instinct it rushed upon me that I was being taken to a madhouse ; like the lightning it flashed upon me that the doctors, my wife, the lawyer, and the minister had thought that my mind was affected, and had quietly conveyed me to a lunatic asylum.

I comprehended the situation ; but for a moment I sat still, dumbfounded, dazed ; then I sprang from the carriage without a word, before my companion could arrest my progress, and dashed along the road, literally running for liberty.

In all my life I had never run so fast ; I had never had such cause to run. As Tennyson says, there was "a spirit in my feet." Let any man feel as I did, that he is leaving a madhouse behind him, and his feet will have "spirit" in them also. I passed several pedestrians with the speed of the wind. They stared at me, and one fat man tried to stop me ; but I gave him a punch in the abdomen, and he fell kicking on the road and shouting "*Sacre Dieu !*" at the top of his rather squeaky voice.

I rushed by two or three houses, and then I turned down a little lane that crossed the main road at an

angle. I felt fresh, vigorous ; I could have run on for an hour.

But, alas ! others could run, too. My volunteer companion of the carriage had good legs, as he now proved ; for, spite of all my efforts, I saw, as I turned the corner of the lane, that he was gaining on me. The driver of the carriage also had leaped from his vehicle and joined in the chase. He was a big, burly man, but he could run like a deer ; he outstripped my carriage companion, he was at my very heels.

I tried the tactics of the hunted hare—I doubled on my tracks—but in vain. The Jehu seized me and held me like a vice. I struggled frantically ; I kicked him and cursed him with all my might. But he never loosed his hold, although he did not resent my insults or return my blows, probably because he did not understand the former or really feel the latter, or it may be that my carriage companion had told him I was crazy. He looked at me in a curious way, more compassionate than angry, but he kept me till my carriage companion came up with me.

I found resistance was impossible. The coachman alone was too much for me ; the two men together were simply irresistible. I protested ; I assured them I was as sane as they were themselves. I pleaded to be taken back to Paris to my family ; but I was told that my family wished me to “be taken care of for a while.”

“What, in a madhouse?” I asked.

“Not a madhouse,” replied my companion ; “only a place of mental and physical rest—only a *maison de santé*.”

“You will be kindly cared for,” he continued. “You will soon be restored to health.”

I said no more—there was no more to say. I was worn out ; I was panting ; I was in the hands of those who were stronger than I.

I bowed my head, and, through an iron gate, entered beyond the great and gloomy wall.

I was now, according to French doctors, a lunatic, and, according to French forms, an inmate of a lunatic asylum.



## CHAPTER IV.

### LIFE IN A MAISON DE SANTÉ.

**T**HE *maison de santé* at Neuilly was a castellated structure of yellow stone, not very large, but really elegant and comfortable—let me tell the truth, even if I lose for the time a portion of my readers' sympathy (I will need all they can spare me by and by). Spite of my natural horror of the place, spite of my forced entry into it, I soon found that life could be made quite endurable even in a lunatic asylum, or at least such a modified madhouse as this at Neuilly.

The house itself was pleasantly situated, overlooking a grove which faced the Bois de Boulogne. It had ample porticoes, and large bay-windows; there was a fine, large, airy hall, and a library and reading-room adjoining; the public parlor was elegantly furnished; and a neat, clean ordinary completed the circuit of the ground floor.

There was nothing to suggest the hospital, or the

lunatic asylum ; it was a small hotel, or large private house, whichever you might prefer to regard it.

The second story was devoted to sleeping-rooms. I was allotted a very comfortable apartment, containing two beds, one for myself, the other for my guardian carriage companion, who was now to act as my temporary keeper.

I soon recovered from my nervous horror of the place, and with my wonted ease took the best view I could of my situation. I was allowed to read the papers (which contained full details of my incarceration—details which annoyed me at the time, and which were telegraphed across the Atlantic, much to the detriment of my business). I played billiards ; I was permitted to smoke ; the servants, mostly women, seemed to understand my wants ; the fare was excellent ; the wines—I am a good judge of wines—were simply superb ; I ate heartily ; I slept well ; I did what I have done very seldom in my restless life—I rested.

I was allowed to receive callers, and many Parisians and American residents paid their respects to me in my new quarters. Among the callers were Mr. Cornwall, of Washington, and Colonel Hoffman, Secretary of Legation ; Marcus Cicero Stanley also called several times. Mr. Stanley said from the start that I was perfectly sane. Drs. Johnson and Parrish, American physicians, who likewise visited me, like-

wise held that I was in my right mind; the French physicians, however, persisted that I needed mental repose. Where doctors differ who shall decide? In fact, from Neuilly to New York, from then till now, my great difficulty has always been to find out whether I am crazy or no. So many people say I am, and so many people say I am not, that I have never yet been able to make up my own mind on the matter. Perhaps before I am through with my narrative my readers may decide the question—if not for me, at least for themselves.

At any rate I really began to enjoy life at Neuilly, especially after I had pledged my word not to attempt to escape for a month, and was in consequence of this promise permitted to visit Paris whenever I chose, day or night, without any other restriction than the constant company of my volunteer keeper, whom I afterward learned had been kindly furnished by Minister Washburne, and liberally paid by my family.

This freedom to visit Paris was a great boon, and I availed myself of it constantly. I frequented the promenades, and attended the places of amusement; in short, I did everything but visit my own family; this I was advised not to do. I found I made plenty of friends, and, to tell the honest truth, rather regretted the day when, after a formal examination by two physicians, in the presence of the Prefect of

Police, I was informed that I was free, being no longer a lunatic.

\* \* \* \* \*

Had I been treated at Neuilly during my first experience of madhouses as I was subsequently treated in America, I would have gone mad certain. But they understand "how to minister to a mind diseased" in France; they soothe you; they do not put you at once in a strait-jacket.



## CHAPTER V.

### A MADMAN ONCE MORE.

**N**OW returned to my family, and having decided finally not to return to America, as I originally intended, but to remain on the Continent, I accompanied my wife and children to Dresden, and then took an extended Continental tour. I visited Wiesbaden, Baden, Homburg, Nice, enjoyed life, was generally considered "a good fellow," and during all this period—extending over a space of nearly two years—nobody for a moment seemed to imagine that I was insane.

In July, 1874, I returned to Paris, announcing my intention to return to New York in the following August.

I engaged a fine house, No. 75 Champs-Élysées, and soon made my residence the headquarters of the American Colony. The Shah of Persia visited Paris at this time, and seeing a chance to make additional publicity for myself (always a good thing to make), I



announced my intention of giving the Shah and his suite a grand reception.

I fulfilled my plan. I kept open house for three days and three nights; entertained the Persian Consul and the suite of the Shah; was visited by most of the consular representatives of the nationalities of the world, and by at least one thousand American ladies and gentlemen, to whom I extended a hearty welcome. I engaged two bands of music, which played day and night; decorated my house within and without in the most elegant manner, and expended over \$16,000 in the reception.

As every press man in Paris was among my guests, the affair was chronicled in all the leading journals of the world, and I felt satisfied with myself and with my investment.

But the excitement proved too much for me; I smoked constantly and took wine with everybody; I talked all the time, and could not sleep. In fact, I suppose, as the phrase goes, "I lost my head," though I certainly never for a moment lost my senses or my reason.

On the day following the reception I was arrested on the charge of being intoxicated and making a disturbance. But this charge was compromised, on the condition that I would accompany the officers to another *maison de santé*, at some distance from Paris.

I had formed my own plans, so I assented to this

compromise; and, insisting only that I should be taken to my new prison in my own carriage, driven by my trusty coachman, Pedro, bade good-by to my wife, and drove off, accompanied by the two officers of the law, *gendarmes*, in resplendent uniforms.

I was, in the eyes of the world, once more a madman.



## CHAPTER VI.

A DÉJEUNER AT THE "CASCADE."—HOW A "MAD-MAN" ESCAPED.

**B**UT I knew that I was not mad. I was not as wild at the prospect of incarceration in a French madhouse now as I had been two years before. Familiarity does not always breed contempt, but it generally diminishes fear, and altogether does away with wonder. I was calm now, much calmer than I had been during my "grand reception."

But I pretended, for my own purposes, to be more nervous, more excitable than ever. I laughed aloud without any apparent cause; I chattered away in English, and said what little French I knew as rapidly as I could; I waved my arms to and fro; I rubbed my hands; I patted the officers on the back; they thought me evidently as mad as a March hare, but perfectly harmless—a good-natured, jolly lunatic, and that was precisely what I wanted them to think me.

As we rode on together we passed the "Cascade"—a restaurant in the Bois de Boulogne, an institution somewhat similar to Stetson's, in the Central Park, New York. My officers of the law were in good humor with each other and with me by this time; and when I told them that I was hungry and thirsty, and invited them to take a *déjeuner* or breakfast with me, they accepted the invitation with alacrity.

It was not every day in the week they were invited to a feast by a liberal-minded lunatic.

We alighted, Pedro remaining with the carriage, my two *gendarmes* walking arm-in-arm with me to the "Cascade." I asked them what they would have; they signified, of course, their wishes for the most expensive dishes—dishes they had never before tasted, I will take my oath. But I ordered what they suggested without a remark, and then I ordered, on my own account, absinthe, champagne, curaçoa, and brandy.

The officers of the law glanced significantly at each other; they were wishing that Heaven would send them just such a lunatic every day!

Our *déjeuner* lasted for three hours or more. My *gendarmes* ate like anacondas and drank like fishes; I would have given the world to follow their example if I could have shared their enjoyment, but I was neither hungry nor thirsty, though I had to pretend to be both.

At last I excused myself for a moment; I felt unwell, I said, and my officers were so drunk by this time that they excused me "for a moment." I rushed from the room in which we had been feasting, and found my faithful Pedro still waiting in the carriage. I handed him a hundred francs and gave him some instructions. He comprehended them.

Five minutes afterward I was nearly a mile nearer the heart of Paris, driving my own horses (a "freak of the rich American," people said, as they saw me), and Pedro had taken my place at the "Cascade," stating to the *gendarmes* that I would return in a little while; that I was really quite sick, but only with a temporary illness, and would not disturb their festivities for the world; let them go on eating and drinking till I came back.

Pedro was a fine-looking, handsome young man, quite gentlemanly in appearance and manner, and could do—what I couldn't—talk French fluently. So he entertained the officers, and plied them with liquor. For half an hour or so they thought "the man was better than the master," but at last they began to wonder at my non-appearance. Pedro left the room in search of me, and returned saying, I was still sick, but would be better shortly. Then the *gendarmes* insisted on seeing me, sick or well (at least one of the *gendarmes* so insisted—the other being "too far gone" to insist on anything), and then Pedro

“came to the front.” He cajoled, he lied ; ultimately he planted himself before the door and refused to allow his master to be disturbed. This course of conduct put the more sober of the two *gendarmes* on his mettle, and a tussle ensued between him and Pedro, in which struggle the two men clinched, and they both fell, rolling over and over on the floor, upsetting the tables, dishes, and the wines, much to the chagrin of the other *gendarme*, who looked with maudlin solemnity at the broken bottles, and picked up his favorite *pâté* from the floor, where it had fallen between the combatants.

Pedro did his best, but the battle ended in favor of the *gendarme*. The officer of the law rushed from the room and sought for poor sick me in vain. Then, taking Pedro into custody, the two officers—one thoroughly sobered by the untoward march of events, the other still very drunk—returned to my residence, from whence that very morning they had taken me in triumph. They entered the house suddenly and found my wife at dinner with some lady friends ; but the officer did not find *me*.

“Where is le grand docteur Helmbold ?” he asked.

But there was no reply. The ladies shrank back astonished—dismayed. Then, to make confusion worse confounded, the other and drunken *gendarme* staggered up to the table, scattering the women, and, striking his fist on the table till all the dishes clat-

tered, he, too, asked with indescribable drunken solemnity, and a hideous leer:

“Where is le grand docteur Helmbold?”

Having asked which conundrum, he gave the assembled company a ghastly wink, and forthwith tumbled on the floor.

Tableau!



## CHAPTER VII.

HOW "THE ESCAPED MADMAN" OCCUPIED HIS TIME.



EANWHILE I had driven like Jehu through the streets of Paris to a fashionable club, to which I had the entrée, and with several leading members of which I was very intimate. Reaching the club-house, I got rid of my carriage, sending it to a stable near by, that it should not be traced, and then I proceeded to make myself very comfortable. I ordered a dinner, and, now that I was free once more, I found myself genuinely hungry. I ate and drank with relish, and then I chatted and smoked and idled through the day, never feeling better in the whole course of my life. Evening coming on, I played cards, and found myself in luck. I played vingt-et-un, euchre, whist, and draw-poker, and won at every game. As the night progressed, I increased my stakes, but my luck seemed to grow with my pluck. I sat at the card-table all that night, never leaving, and never ceasing to win, till the early daylight glanced in at the open window. Then I went



to bed richer by twenty thousand francs than I had retired the night before. I slept in one of the private sleeping-rooms of the club-house, nominally as a guest of one of the members. I reposed dreamlessly till nearly two o'clock in the day—a longer period of unbroken sleep than I had experienced for years. I rose “like a giant refreshed with wine,” figuratively speaking (for I had not been drinking much, and I am anything but “gigantic”), partook of such a breakfast as one can partake of in Paris only, and then set to work to play cards again.

I played for twelve consecutive hours, with only half an hour's intermission for a pretence at a dinner, and won, before I went to bed at five o'clock the next morning, forty-five thousand francs more—sixty-five thousand francs in all.

I felt happy, and no wonder—I had “gotten back” the money I was “out on” through the “grand reception.” I was even with my notoriety; I had advertised myself magnificently, gratis—no wonder I felt happy.

The next day I naturally enough felt disinclined for cards. I wanted to go home. I started out with two American friends and made some purchases of magnificent lace for my wife; then I sent these friends to my wife with this lace and my compliments. She graciously accepted both, and I went home and was tenderly received.

During the day the confounded intermeddler of a lawyer called, and various friends and acquaintances. Their visits excited me somewhat, and probably my family and friends thought that I had not yet wholly recovered from my recent nervous attack.

At any rate, early the next morning, I found myself in the hands of two persons, commanded to take me to a *maison de santé*, located at Sceaux-Seine, about seventeen miles from Paris.

These two persons differed altogether from my *gendarmes*; they were not only huge, strong, physically irresistible, but they were unapproachable. They did not drink, they did not smoke, they would not take anything to eat—just then. What could I do with two such men? I surrendered at discretion.



## CHAPTER VIII.

A MADHOUSE "IN THE RURAL DISTRICTS."—A FAIR FRIEND.

**I** WAS now taken to a *maison de santé*, located at a place called Sceaux-Seine, seventeen miles from Paris, already mentioned. I was driven there in my own carriage; and, despite my peculiar situation, I enjoyed the ride. Our route lay through one of the loveliest sections around Paris, and nature, to my eyes, never looked so lovely as she looked that day. The whole world seemed blooming.

Reaching Sceaux-Seine, I found it quite a town, a charming country town—a *rus in urbe*. And the *maison de santé* to which I was introduced was one of the prettiest structures in the place—a delightful *château* with nothing repulsive about it. It never would have been taken for a madhouse.

Its interior corresponded with its external appearance. The rooms were airy, cosy, elegantly furnished. There was a library, a music-room, a bil-

liard-room, a cheerful dining-room. The sleeping apartments were all that could possibly be desired. My room commanded a delicious view of the garden, the grounds with fruit-trees and roses, and the winding River Seine. The place was under the management of Monsieur Reddon, a physician who had taken for his specialty mental diseases. He was a middle-aged, fine-looking gentleman, rather stout and rather florid—a cultivated man, who had not only studied books, but travelled and seen the world. He spoke English pretty well for a Frenchman, and received me with *empressement*—as one man of the world would receive another, not as a keeper receiving a charge, or a doctor a patient.

In fact, the system of the place never obtruded their diseases upon its inmates. A man who had the taint of madness in him was not reminded at every step and every minute of that unpleasant truth. It was ignored as much as possible. In America you would have been reminded of it constantly, persistently—here, persistently, constantly, gently you were led to forget it. Life was rendered, as far as could possibly be, a pleasure, not a punishment. In an American lunatic asylum sane men are driven mad; but in France the main design of such an asylum is to render mad people gradually and pleasantly sane.

I found Monsieur Reddon a very delightful companion as well as a very polite host, and I think that

Monsieur Reddon must have soon found, to his own satisfaction, that whatever else I was or was not, I was at least *not* crazy. He treated me with the utmost kindness, and allowed me the utmost freedom. I mingled socially with the half-dozen or so other gentlemen who were inmates of this establishment, and who, though erratic, never seemed to me in any way disordered in their intellects. I also enjoyed the privilege of personal intimacy with the wife and daughter of Monsieur Reddon, two ladies of culture and refinement.

Madame Reddon was a woman of middle age, but still stately and beautiful—a regal blonde. Her daughter, Mademoiselle Marie, was a charming girl, eighteen years of age, slender, piquant, highly educated, and brimful of sentiment.

I esteemed madame highly, and in a little while I learned to love Mademoiselle Marie as though she had been my own daughter. She was wonderfully winning. Everybody liked her. As for me, comparatively lonely as I was, and thrown with her in my loneliness, I adored her. She taught me that existence could be made delightful even in a madhouse. She sung for me in the summer evenings seated in the rustic arbor ; she played the piano in the parlör amid the softly-gathering shadows of the twilight ; she played games with me after the lamps were lighted ; she taught me French in return for my imperfectly teaching her

English ; she was my constant, my ever-cheerful companion. I am proud to believe, to know, that she reciprocated my sincere affection.

She was pure as an angel—as virtuous as she was beautiful. She was a devout Catholic ; and though gayety itself, was strict as a devotee in all the observances of her faith. She was at once the most genuinely earthly and the most genuinely heavenly woman I ever knew—a woman who forced me to think more highly of her sex.

With such a companion, and with the society of her estimable parents, I passed a most delightful period. I liked a pastoral life. We had garden *fêtes* twice a week ; we had weekly excursions and picnics ; there were boating parties on the Seine ; I was perfectly free except in name. I was for a while entirely happy, and I ought to have remained so.

But, alas ! alas ! Man never is, but always is to be, blest. In a few weeks this pastoral life palled on me. I wanted to go to Paris, if only for a day. I longed for whirl and bustle ; I wanted to see my family, my wife and my children, who had been withdrawn from their school in Dresden, and had been transferred to a fashionable school in Paris.

I had everything but my freedom ; but I had not that. For although I was free to go anywhere I chose within a mile or so of the *maison de santé*, I was not allowed to go anywhere at all without some one else,

man or woman, or it might be Marie, was with me. I was under surveillance ; delicate and unobtrusive, it is true, but surveillance, nevertheless.

Is it a wonder, then, that, having everything in the world but liberty, I was willing to surrender everything else in the world for liberty? I grew moody, excitable, nervous, cross.

At last one day I asked Monsieur Reddon directly : “Doctor, do you think I have been, or I am, crazy?” He made no answer to this sudden question. Then I asked : “If I am not crazy, have I not a perfect right to myself? am I not entitled to my liberty?” The doctor evaded the reply, and saying something to me soothingly, bowed, and left me in charge of Marie, who, with a smile, approached.

I noticed that Monsieur Reddon took it for granted that with Marie I was perfectly secure, that my affection for her would restrain me from attempting to escape against her consent. So it would ; but on this occasion I so pleaded with Marie for my freedom—I so implored her to let me see Paris once more, and my wife and my children, that she consented to permit me to escape, after pledging her my word of honor that I would return to her and her father within a week.

It was a glorious summer afternoon, the sun was slowly sinking to his Western home, the country looked like Paradise, when I kissed Marie good-by upon her forehead.



“Take care of yourself,” murmured the sweet girl, “and mind, you must come back. But, ah! forgive me for reminding you of that, have I not your promise——”

“But stay,” I cried, “what excuse can you give your father when he sees you returning to the house without me?”

“Ah! I shall give him the best excuse in the world, I shall tell him the simple truth; but I will not tell him anything for several hours yet. I shall not see him till nearly bed-time to-night; by that time you will be in Paris—that Paris which all you Americans love so much—so, farewell.”

She extended me her hand; I would have saluted her once more upon her fair, white forehead, but a peasant was coming up the road; so I passed on, my eyes looking their adieux to the dear eyes of that high-souled maiden.

“A man who has won such a friend as that cannot be a bad man or a madman,” I whispered to myself as I walked on to catch the train for Paris.

I was now free and alone.





## CHAPTER IX.

“HOME AGAIN,” AND A FUGITIVE ONCE MORE.



REACHED Paris without any adventure or difficulty, and went direct to my wife. She was glad to see me, but astonished; I called upon my children also; they were genuinely delighted to see their father. I embraced them, passed a happy morning with them, and then plunged into the delights of Paris—those delights to which I had so long been a stranger.

But the very next day I found myself again a prisoner. The emissaries of Monsieur Reddon arrested me, instigated thereto I believe by that intermeddling lawyer, already alluded to, who has always been my evil angel, my *bête noir*, and who now appeared upon the scene as the adviser of my wife and family, and as acting, against my will, “for my best interests,” as he phrased it.

I would undoubtedly have returned to Monsieur Reddon’s voluntarily at the end of a week. I re-

membered my promise to Marie, and I intended to fulfil it. But it seems that Monsieur Reddon, unlike his daughter, placed no reliance upon my word, and sent his agents after me at once.

Within forty-eight hours from the time I had bidden Marie adieu on the country road I was once more an inmate of the *maison de santé*.

"Welcome home again," said Monsieur Reddon, on my return, extending his hand to me as quietly and politely and pleasantly as though I had been his brother—as though I were not at that very moment his prisoner.

It was not "home again," as I soon found. The place was the same, and the people were the same—but my treatment was far different. I was deprived of my great solace—the companionship of Marie. She seemed as attached to me as ever; she always spoke to me gently and lovingly, but, alas! I seldom heard her speak at all; she was rarely permitted to see me. When we met it was by accident; she was forced to avoid me, while I was compelled to bear the constant company of a burly Frenchman, who acted as my keeper, and who never trusted me out of his sight.

M. Reddon, and his wife also, treated me with manifest reserve. All the music and games in the parlor in the evenings were over now, just as were the picnics and rural *fêtes* in the daytime.

Life was dull, and, to make it duller, I was sent to bed every night at nine o'clock, with my bulldog of a keeper lying on a cot in the hall at my bedroom door.

I had nothing to do ; I was allowed to do nothing. To a man of my active temperament such enforced idleness was not only painful, it was dangerous. Although my food was sufficient, although I took plenty of out-of-door exercise, although all my physical wants were amply provided for, yet I verily believe that if I had submitted to a month or two of this nothing-to-occupy-one's-mind life, I would indeed have gone mad.

I am convinced from my own experience that the lack of mental work, and the lack of stimulus for mental work, on the part of the patients, is one of the worst evils which characterize the management of all institutions for the insane, or those supposed to be so. Even if a mind is disordered, it does not follow that it is incapable of occupation ; and to allow the brain nothing to do but to feed upon its own fancies is very unwise and unnatural.

One week of this sort of idleness made me more excitable than any of my periodical fits of dissipation had ever rendered me. At the end of a second week I would have become a veritable lunatic had I not determined to effect my escape. I brooded over this idea of escape day and night. It occupied

almost my entire time, and thus served me a most useful purpose.

How on earth could I get rid of my bulldog of a keeper? This was the first problem. Second, how was I to get over the wall which surrounded the beautiful grounds of this *maison de santé*? That wall which, though ornamental, was, nevertheless, high and smooth and strong, and beyond which I was not now allowed to pass, save very rarely, and then only with two men, my bulldog keeper and another man, almost as formidable, one guardian on each side of me.

The more I pondered upon them the more difficult of solution did these problems become. I could not bribe my keepers, for the simple reason that I had not the wherewithal; M. Reddon had assumed charge of all my moneys, paid up due accounts and all my bills, purchased for me all I needed, but allowed me no money in hand. And, besides, my guardians did not look like men who could readily be bribed. Who can bribe bulldogs?

I could not calculate upon Marie to aid me; I could not bring my mind to consent to employ her liking for me against her father's wishes or interests. Besides, I was by no means certain of that, even if I could influence her for a second time to displease her father by releasing me. At any rate I could not contrive to have any extended conversation with her un-

der present circumstances. I was reduced to the verge of despair. But luck, chance, Providence often does for us what we never could do for ourselves.

One bright, hot morning M. Reddon was called away to Paris on urgent business. This necessitated the employment of my regular bulldog of a keeper in another direction, leaving me to the care of my other keeper, whom I had christened "Bulldog, Junior." But about eleven o'clock, as, in company with another patient, I was walking in the garden, Bulldog, Junior, who was with us, was taken with a violent fit of the colic, and went to the house to procure some relief for his intense pains, calling upon a third keeper to supply his place with us during his temporary absence.

But keeper number three did not answer the summons immediately, and in the few minutes during which we two patients were keeperless I decided my fate. My companion was an old man, who did not care to leave the place himself, but he helped me to escape, and, I learned afterward, did all he could to guard my retreat.

I explained to him my position and my plans in a few words; then he and I approached the wall; he stood still, directly under the wall, and I climbed upon him, and, standing on his shoulders, leaped over the wall.

The trees were thick just where we stood, so our movements were not visible from the house.

I had no coat on (it being a warm day I had taken a fancy to an airing in my shirt-sleeves), but I cared not for that. I reached the ground on the other side of the wall, and walked as rapidly as I could ; I did not run for fear of attracting attention as a fugitive, taking a short cut through corn-fields and wheat-fields past the village. I avoided the road, lest I might be recognized and traced, and I made up my mind to travel on foot, and by as unfrequented a route as I could, to Paris, shunning the line of telegraph and railroad for reasons too obvious to mention.

Every now and then I met some one who stared at me—a gentleman without a coat ; but no one molested me, and there were no signs of any quest being made for me.

Two hours passed, and I was about six miles or so nearer Paris than when I left my prison.

The sun was exceedingly hot ; I perspired freely, but I kept on for an hour or two more. Then my strength failed me.

I asked a peasant how far I was from Paris. He replied about eight miles. I had only walked one-half my necessary distance ; I could not have walked the other half then for my life, it was so very warm and close, and, besides, I was so hungry. I had eaten a very light breakfast that morning : I could have

eaten now ravenously. I made up my mind to rest in a little hamlet to which I was now approaching.

I would get the best dinner I could procure, would rest at the village inn over night—I would certainly be safe in that obscure locality—and then walk the balance of the distance in the early morning. Perhaps I could borrow or hire some sort of a coat, too, in the village. I certainly could not enter Paris without a coat.

Having thus mapped out mentally my plan of operations, I put my hand in my pocket to pull out my portemonnaie, when, great heavens! I recollected that all the little money Monsieur Reddon had given me two days before—he had advanced me as a great favor thirty francs—was in my pocketbook, and this pocketbook was at this very moment lying on the little table in my bedroom at the *maison de santé*, in one of the pockets of the coat I had carelessly thrown on the table that morning as I started out for my garden walk. I had not a franc with me—not a sou.

Hungry and half naked, yet without money; tired, but without the wherewithal to command a place of rest; a stranger in a strange land, a fugitive without a cent, what was to become of me?

I was free now and sane now, but was it not better to be a prisoner, and presumably of unsound mind, than hungry, thirsty, foot-sore, and penniless?

I felt desperate, and in my desperation I rubbed my



hands rapidly—as is my habit when excited—and gesticulated, muttering I know not what.

A group of country people saw me, and, I suppose, wondered at me, and talked about me to each other. I dare say I looked and acted strangely.

I entered the little hamlet, and just as I passed a little store—what we would call in America “a corner grocery”—my head began to swim, I felt faint, I fell to the ground.

I remember no more till I woke and found myself inside the “corner grocery,” with a crowd of country bumpkins staring at me, as though I was a wild beast on exhibition, and one of the prettiest young women I had ever seen holding my head and bathing my temples.

The water on my forehead soon restored me to my senses, and a glass of wine, offered me by the charming woman with a charming smile, completed my restoration.

I thanked her in the best French I could command, and then I signified my wish to speak with her alone. She summoned a man, a nice young fellow, whom I ascertained was her husband, to wait on the shop, and then withdrew with me into a little room back of the store.

I made a clean breast of it; I told her my story as plainly as I could; she understood half of it, and sympathetically guessed at the rest. I trusted to her



implicitly, and she deserved my confidence. To this day I cannot think of that young French wife and mother (her little girl was playing in the room back of the shop when we entered it) without a tear, a smile, and a "God bless her."

She called her husband in and introduced him to me. He was worthy of her, and soon took as much interest in me as his wife did.

The worthy couple spread a neat, well-cooked repast for me in the little "living-room"; then they afforded me hospitality that night, and the next morning, after a good breakfast, they sent me on my way rejoicing, and with my gratitude streaming from my eyes.

To make their kindness utterly complete, the young husband loaned me his Sunday coat, which fitted me tolerably well, and the young wife put in my hand five francs—enough to supply my possible wants till I reached Paris; for I still adhered to my determination to go on foot, avoiding the railroad and the telegraph.

I was overpowered with such generosity; I wrung the husband's hand, and then, impelled by an irresistible impulse, I kissed the beautiful young wife upon her forehead; meanwhile, the little girl clambered on my knees, putting up her pure lips to mine. You would have thought I was an intimate relative of the family, bidding them good-by, not a stranger

and a foreigner who had not known of their existence the morning before.

There are kind-hearted men and women even in this cruel world.

I reached Paris about noon, without further adventure.



## CHAPTER X.

### FRANCE OR ENGLAND—BOND OR FREE.



WENT direct to a personal friend of mine, who lived in Rue Scribe; found him at home, and borrowed from him a coat more suitable to the ordinary style of a modern gentleman than that which the kind French village tradesman friend had loaned me. I also borrowed from my Paris acquaintance a sum of money, fifty francs of which I sent that very day to my good Samaritans of the hamlet, in repayment of their loan of five francs (although it was ten times the nominal amount, it was not really half enough), accompanying the money with a note of thanks, which I know the good souls valued even more, and also sending a little present for their little girl.

Then, avoiding my own residence, I visited the fashionable school where my children were being educated, and passed the remainder of the day in their innocent society. Their company gave me what

I needed — rest ; their intelligent prattle amused without exciting me ; in their embraces I soon forgot the scenes through which I had lately passed.

Thank God for the children !

I remained over night at a hotel in the neighborhood of the school, not visiting my residence at all, and retiring to bed at an early hour.

Bright and early the next morning I was at the school, and with my children again. During the morning my wife drove up in her carriage, to visit her darlings. She was surprised, of course, to meet me then and there. I explained all that had transpired, and made my excuses for not calling upon her first ; “but,” I said, “I felt so hungry for the children.”

She accepted my explanations ; and my children, my wife, and myself passed a delightful morning together, one of the very few “home” mornings we had enjoyed lately. I never knew what a splendid family I had before. I resolved to lead in future a more domestic life. I began to appreciate what it was to be a father. My wife sat beside me, I took my children on my knee, I looked upward in mute gratitude to heaven, when a noise of carriage-wheels was heard.

A carriage drove up to the house ; there was a stir in the hall ; there was a knock at the door ; a servant entered, and, looking mysteriously at my wife, said, “A person wants to see madame.”

I rose. "I will see the person," I said to my wife.

The servant respectfully reminded me that it was madame and not monsieur whom the mysterious caller wished to see.

"You had better stay where you are," said my wife, rising, and, after whispering with the servant, leaving the room.

As she left, I peered through the door, and in the entry I saw standing my quondam keeper, my bulldog of the *maison de santé* from which I had just escaped; I also saw behind my bulldog the forms of two of the *attachés* of the *maison de santé*.

I comprehended the situation at once; my escape had become known; M. Reddon had sent his emissaries to my residence at Paris; there they had probably learned that I had not been seen at my house, but that my wife had just left to see her children, and the emissaries had followed on the trail of my wife.

I waited for no more developments just then; I hastily kissed my children, enjoining on them silence and discretion. The children behaved admirably; they stared at me with all their eyes, but held their tongues, until they saw me spring through the window upon the green shutters on the outside.

Then they shouted, at the top of their lungs, "Papa will kill himself!" and ran out of the room.

Their cries aroused the whole establishment ; my wife rushed into the room, and seeing it empty and the window opened, understood what I was doing ; that I was descending from a second story window, by the window-shutters, to the ground, and that I preferred the risk of breaking my limbs to being again imprisoned in a *maison de santé*.

My wife, in this crisis, took pity upon me ; she seemed to enter into my feelings, and to appreciate my desire for liberty. No matter what she thought of my mental condition, my repeated arrests and escapes seemed to have touched her heart—she acted gloriously.

She put the emissaries of M. Reddon on a false scent, and rushed down-stairs and out of the house. I had reached the ground by this time in safety, and was preparing to rush down the street, when my wife stood before me.

I looked at her ; she looked full at me.

I was in a whirl. Would she think it her duty to surrender me to the authorities, or would she take it to be her duty to aid me in my escape ? I clasped her by the hand ; I pleaded with my looks.

She understood my silent supplications. Tears came into her beautiful eyes.

“My poor boy,” she said, “you shall not be a prisoner this time, if I can help you. Here !” she

cried, a sudden thought striking her, “jump into my carriage—I will go with you.”

I saw the carriage standing at the door. My wife ran to the coachman, and gave him instructions ; then she sprang into the carriage, and beckoned me to follow her example. Then the coachman drove off rapidly.

“Where are M. Reddon’s men ?” I asked.

“Oh ! they are looking for you inside the school-house. I told them you were secreted inside. They are waiting for you in the hall this moment. Even if they see us now, they can do nothing. We have the start of them. I have sent their carriage away on a trumped-up errand without their knowledge.” (I remember now that my wife’s carriage was the only one I had seen at the door of the school-house when we left it.) “Besides,” continued my wife, “they will think it all right, as I am with you.”

We drove on rapidly. I being bareheaded, of course we attracted considerable attention. We stopped a moment at a hat-store ; my wife bought me a hat ; then we drove, without further pause, to the Dépôt d’Angleterre. My wife kissed me good-by, and put in my hand a thousand francs. It was settled that I was to go to England at once ; there I would be safe from further annoyance.

Meanwhile she would see Minister Washburne personally, and use her influence with him to end my persecutions in France.

It was all agreed between us, and my wife waved her hand to me as the train started off for Boulogne ; and, as I afterwards ascertained, just five minutes after the train started, the emissaries of M. Reddon dashed into the depot.





## CHAPTER XI.

### TWO MEN AND I.

**H**AD I fulfilled my original intention of going straight to England, all would have been well; but, alas! I changed my mind ere the cars reached Boulogne. The idea of living in London grew more and more distasteful the more and more I thought of it. I adored Paris, and hated to leave it voluntarily, even though I knew that if I returned I should be taken from it by force. I changed my plans as the train steamed on. I would myself call upon Minister Washburne, who was passing the summer at Boulogne-sur-Mer.

I acted on my changed resolution. I did not catch the tidal boat across the Channel. I sought Minister Washburne at his summer home; but, alas! he had gone to Paris that very morning. What did I do but forthwith return to Paris!

Once more within the French metropolis, I called on several of my American friends—Mr. William

Cornwall, of Louisville; Mr. Charles and Mr. William Maffit, of St. Louis; and Mr. Raymond—and stated my position. My friends offered at once to protect me from further trouble, also to call upon my wife, notify her of my return, and to arrange matters with Minister Washburne.

I lived for five days at the rooms of Mr. Cornwall, who treated me in a princely manner. He entreated me not to leave his rooms, but on the morning of the fifth day my confinement in the house became irksome—I needed exercise—I apprehended no impending trouble—so I wrote a note to the effect that I would return in an hour, and started from the house.

I had a delightful walk; the weather was delicious; I strolled along the Boulevard des Italiens towards the Church de Madeleine, wandering through the flower-markets, and from thence I walked along the Rue de Rivoli to the Champs-Élysées. Ah! life was indeed charming on such a day as this—to be at large and in Paris, what more could I ask of existence?

I looked around me, and, lo! two men stood beside me. They were rough-looking men, in ordinary garb—one of them was a dark-browed, burly, surly individual; his companion was a slight, but wiry, personage. I took them first for Irishmen, then I felt certain they were Americans.

The burly, surly man placed himself on one side of

me, and did not speak a word ; the slight but wiry man placed himself on the other side of me, and did not speak a word. I looked at them in wonder. What did it mean ? Was it accident, or a jest ; or was it part of a design ?

I saw a fiacre slowly driving along, empty. It seemed to be following the two men. I noticed a signal of intelligence exchanged between its driver and the slight, wiry man. My suspicions were aroused at once. I wished that I had remained at my friend Cornwall's.

I commenced to walk rapidly ; the two men kept pace with me, one on each side. At last one of them spoke to me in English :

"It's no use, Doc—we want you. You must go with us. We are going to take you back where you came from."

I "took the men in" at a glance, my eyes being now opened. They were men who had been hired to "shadow me," to play the spy upon me, and to take me back to Sceaux-sur-Seine. I recognized one of the men—the wiry one—I had seen him at some of the lower haunts in Paris.

Of course, they were bribed to arrest me ; and, of course, if I could bribe them higher they would let me alone. This was my hope, and on this I based my instant plan.

"How much do you get for this job ? Whatever

it is I will double it," said I, pulling from my pocket several hundred francs.

"That's not enough, Doc," said the wiry man. "You must do better than that for us."

"We want two thousand francs," growled the burly, surly man.

"Well, take this on account," I continued, offering them again the money ; "and come with me to my rooms and I will give you the rest."

"It won't do, Doc—it won't do. You will get us into your rooms and then we will be in your power or in that of your friends ; now you are in ours. So pay us the money now—give us two thousand francs down, or we will take you on the spot."

So spoke the slight, wiry man, and the burly, surly man grunted his acquiescence.

I was at my wits' end ; but I resolved to keep on walking as long as I could ; perhaps I could meet some friend or acquaintance to whom I could appeal. But the two men seemed to comprehend my game. Without further ado they seized me, one by each arm. I struggled ; they tightened their grasp, and cursed me terribly.

"Don't make a fool of yourself," growled the burly, surly man, "or it will be the worse for you." And his frown showed that he meant mischief.

Resistance was in vain. I was in a foreign land ; I could not speak the language well enough to make

myself understood. The burly, surly man had triple my strength and was prepared to use it. I was in the hands of the Philistines!

The fiacre stopped; I was forcibly lifted into it. I cast a last, despairing glance around at the happy crowds, the cheerful promenade—I saw not a face I knew. The sky was cloudless, the air was balmy; but nature only mocked at my helplessness. I was hustled violently into the fiacre; the two men sprang in with me; I was driven off rapidly. I was a prisoner for the fourth time.



## CHAPTER XII.

“MEET ME AT MIDNIGHT.”



NEVER shall forget that ride in that carriage, not if I live to see the next Centennial. A perfectly sane man hurried off in broad daylight by two bribed ruffians to an insane asylum!

As I thought upon this outrage I could restrain myself no longer. I gave a yell that might have been mistaken for a madman's (all I cared for was to attract the attention of some passer-by), and then I tried with all my might to wrest myself from my captors. I might as easily have wrested my destiny from the hands of fate.

The wiry man cursed me, and the burly, surly man tightened his grasp on my arm till I screamed with pain, and beat me on the mouth with his fist till I began to bleed.

“Be quiet, will you, you infernal fool!” he growled.

Then, with a fearful imprecation, he shouted to the driver to increase his speed. We rolled on more rapidly; some pedestrians stopped and stared at the carriage, but no one interfered with our progress. In about two hours we reached Sceaux-sur-Seine, and had driven to the gate of the *maison de santé*.

M. Reddon, with his stereotyped politeness, was waiting to receive me. He apologized for the necessity he was under of recapturing me every time I attempted to escape.

"You see," said he, "I am responsible for your safe keeping."

"But you know I am not mad; that I am really as sane as you are," I protested.

He shrugged his shoulders as only a Frenchman can shrug them. "We will not argue that point," he replied. "But let me obliterate the marks of your journey, and then let me offer you some refreshment." He led me to a room, where I washed my face from the blood that stained it, and then he ordered some meat and wine to be brought me. I ate and drank, and was refreshed.

My two captors had disappeared, much to my relief; but my quondam bulldog of a keeper was now brought in, and given, in my presence, strict instructions on no account to leave me alone, not for a moment, on any pretext.



“You see, M. Helmbold,” said M. Reddon, “if you escape again it will be a miracle, and not our fault.”

I felt very wretched now ; the excitement of my capture was over. I was looked upon in the *maison de santé* no longer as a guest to be pleased, but a prisoner to be guarded. My bulldog of a keeper announced to me, in so many words, that he was going to stand no more nonsense ; that I should not be allowed to talk to anybody or to associate with anybody but himself, and that if I attempted to escape he would show me that there was such a thing as punishment. I had had an easy time so far, everything my own way, but now he would show me who was master !

Suddenly I heard the sounds of carriage-wheels ; I recognized familiar voices. Ah ! I thought, my Paris friends had found me out ; missing me, they had suspected my spiriting-away ; they had come to the *maison de santé* after me.

I was right in my conjecture. Messrs. Cornwall, Maffit, and Raymond had followed me to my prison ; and, after a conversation with M. Reddon, they were permitted to see me.

They spent the afternoon with me, my bulldog of a keeper and M. Reddon remaining in the room, though apart from our group. My friends reproached me with my imprudence in having disobeyed their



instructions and gone out for that walk, but they denounced my arrest as an outrage.

"But," said one of my friends, in a low tone, "of course, Helmbold, you will escape again?"

He spoke half in jest, but I answered him in dead earnest, though in a tone even lower than his own. "Meet me to-morrow night with a carriage; meet me at midnight at 'The Garden' (a dancing-garden in Sceaux-sur-Seine which I had often visited), and you will find me if I am alive."

My friend looked at me, understood that I meant what I said, nodded expressively, and changed the conversation.

About six o'clock my friends drove back to Paris, and about eight o'clock I was sent to bed.

I was placed this time in a narrow cell of a room, eight feet by twelve, with no furniture save a wooden bed and a straw cot; there was no chair, no table, no carpet, and no light. The only illumination came from a little grated window on the top of the rear wall, and through the lattice-work over the door. The former admitted whatever outside light there was; the latter admitted the dim rays of the hall-lamp, but both together only served to make darkness visible. My bulldog accompanied me to my cell, and entered it with me. "Undress," he said. "Not before you," I answered. "Well, then, you will have to sleep with your clothes on, for I won't leave you,"

he continued. Nor did he leave me till I had gotten into bed ; and then when he retired he took with him my coat, vest, pantaloons, boots, and hat. I was abandoned to my reflections.

Needless to say I did not sleep that night at all ; equally needless to state that night seemed an average week in duration. About ten o'clock, as near as I could guess, I heard a noise, as of the movement of a piece of furniture in the hall outside my cell ; then I heard footsteps. It was my bulldog placing his bed against my door for the night. He would be my bulldog even while he slept.

He did sleep and snore. His nose would have kept me awake, even if my own thoughts had permitted oblivion. I envied him his repose. As for me, I bent all my energies of mind to plan out my arrangements for escape. For escape the next night I would ; I would meet my friends at midnight at "The Garden," as I had promised. And once free, I would never again permit myself to be retaken ; for my escapes were becoming monotonous to me ; why escape, if I was always to be rearrested ? And each time that I was recaptured I was treated more severely ; I saw that clearly. I felt that if I continued my recent series of flights and captures the period would come when I would find out what a madhouse meant ; when I would be not only imprisoned, but, it might be, tortured ; M. Reddon could be cruel, if he was forced to

be ; I was convinced of that—or my enemies might consign me to a place worse than this *maison de santé* ; to some place where I should be shown no mercy. Doubtless there were such places. I made up my mind that night to escape the next night at all risks ; and, once free again, I would leave France for ever. I would not trouble myself about Minister Washburne ; I would not trouble my friends in Paris any more ; I would, within forty-eight hours, be a free American in London. I lay in my little bed all night thinking and planning.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### HOW I KEPT MY APPOINTMENT.

**E**ARLY the next morning my bulldog entered my room. I was compelled to dress in his presence; then I was compelled to take breakfast with him; then I was compelled to take an hour's walk with him around the garden; then I was taken back to my cell and locked up in it till dinner-time.

I was forced to eat my noonday dinner with my bulldog; then I was forced to take another walk with him around the garden; then I was permitted as a great favor to sit in the parlor, on a sofa (the bulldog seated beside me), and read what papers I could get for an hour or so; then I took my evening meal, with my bulldog at my side; then I was walked around the garden with him a third time, and then I was told to go to bed.

It was only half-past seven o'clock; I pleaded for a little longer grace ere I was locked up for the night.

But my bulldog had his own reasons for getting rid of me as soon as possible, and was inexorable.

After all, so far as the weather was concerned, I did not lose much by curtailing my evening. It was growing somewhat chilly ; the sky was cloudy ; it was threatening a storm.

And I certainly had little to lose in getting rid of my keeper for awhile. The enforced companionship of a man like this all day was a nuisance which, if I had been compelled to endure it for any length of time, would have irritated me beyond measure—would at last have driven me mad in earnest.

All day long I had not been permitted to associate with the other inmates of the *maison de santé*. Probably having ascertained that I had escaped on the last occasion through the aid of a fellow-inmate, M. Reddon had determined to close all chance for further trouble in that direction at least.

I entered my cell for the second time, mentally vowing that it was for the last time ; yet I had only my will to sustain and to aid me. I had been able to make no arrangements for escape ; but where there is a will there is a way. I trusted to the chapter of accidents, to Providence, and to myself.

Just as on the night before, my keeper insisted on remaining in my cell while I undressed ; but to-night I contrived to retain my pantaloons, pretending that my bedclothes were insufficient, and that I would

therefore like to sleep for the night in my pantaloons. My keeper growled at this suggestion ; but if he had refused he would have been obliged to go down-stairs and then come up again, to bring me additional bed-clothes, or take the chance of my complaining to M. Reddon. So, being additionally bribed by one of my best cigars, he permitted me to retain the desired garments, though he took away with him every other article of my clothing. I coaxed hard to retain my coat, but in vain ; I was obliged to be satisfied with my pantaloons.

As he locked the door I heard a female voice in the hallway ; it proved to be one of the maid-servants of the establishment, for whom I had previously noticed my bulldog had evinced a liking. The pair talked a while, and then withdrew together ; this much I could ascertain by dint of listening.

Coupling this fact with my keeper's desire to get rid of me at an earlier hour than usual this evening, and thinking over a stray phrase that had fallen from his lips during the day, I felt assured that he had an appointment of some sort with the maid-servant for that night. Here was my opportunity ; the later he was with her the longer he would be away from me ; perhaps he wouldn't sleep to-night, as last night, in the hall before my door.

I was in a fever of impatience to do something, to attempt something ; but I must wait, and for hours

be content doing nothing. I had told my friends to meet me at midnight; that was four hours off; besides, everybody was stirring about now, and would be till after ten o'clock. I must possess my soul in patience.

I endured a mental hell for four hours and more. No victim of the Inquisition ever suffered more genuine tortures. To crown my woes, I heard the rain-drops falling fiercely on the roof, and against the little grated window at the rear of my cell. The threatened storm had come, and was proving itself a tempest.

I restrained my impatience as long as I could. I waited till it was nearly eleven o'clock, as close as I could calculate (for I had no watch, that and my ready money had been taken by M. Reddon for safe keeping), and then, when I could endure inactivity no longer—when I felt that I must act, or go mad—I acted.

I had ere this ascertained that the little grated window at the rear of my cell overlooked a part of the garden; but it was too narrow for me to think of wedging even my littleness through it; and, besides, the bar was too strong for me to think of removing it.

I turned my attention, therefore, to the lattice-work over my door; it was a little wider, very little, than the rear window, and had no iron bar across it. As quietly as I could I moved my bed to the door, threw



off the mattress and bedclothes, turned the bed on end, and on it climbed up to the lattice-work.

After infinite difficulty, I contrived to tear away enough woodwork to admit of the passage of my body ; then I put my head through the broken lattice, and, after a deal of wriggling and contortion and failure and determination, managed to get my leg through also. Finally I dropped to the floor on the outside of my cell.

Luckily, I had no boots on, so my descent made no great noise. The hall was in darkness—the hall-lamp was extinguished at ten o'clock each evening. I was in utter darkness ; but I knew my localities. I waited not a moment ; my bulldog of a keeper might return at any minute—I thanked Heaven for the maid-servant, who had already so long and so unexpectedly (to me) detained him.

Right opposite my cell-door, across the hall, was a window. This looked out on an open space which extended between the side of the house and the outer wall which surrounded the *maison de santé*. The distance between this wall and my window was—according to a calculation I had made that day—about nine feet.

If I could estimate and control my own physical powers so that I could leap, in the dark, from the window-sill to the wall, then I might in a second leap spring from the top of the wall to the ground, a dis-



tance of some sixteen feet. But if I miscalculated, or misdirected my energies—if I missed the wall and fell to the ground, inside the enclosure, I stood a chance of being torn to pieces by a bulldog (on four legs), which had recently been added to the attractions of the place; or, if I hurled myself against the wall, I would break my bones, if not batter myself to death. And even if I should jump wildly and clear the wall and fall upon the ground, outside my prison, such a leap, of thirty feet or so, might prove too much for me.

But I trusted to Providence, raised the window quietly—there was no impediment—and crept out on the sill.

The wind blew the rain against me in sheets, as it were. In a second I was drenched to the skin—literally “to the skin”—as I had no vest or coat on, and my linen shirt became a wet rag at once. I could not see a star in the heavens—nor a foot before me. It was sheer madness to attempt the leap.

But I attempted it, and, spite the infinite chances against me, succeeded. The wall was a little lower than the window, and was pretty wide; my feet alighted on its top, steadily and surely, more so, probably, than I would have managed even in broad daylight. Desperation, like love, can accomplish all things.

In a moment more I had leaped to the ground. I

was bootless ; my stockings were already mere soaked rags, and my feet were sore. I was shivering with wet and cold ; I had neither vest nor coat. The storm beat violently on my bare head ; but I was on the outside of my prison, and I ran with all my might through the darkness and the tempest to keep my midnight appointment with my friends, who were waiting for me in a carriage at "The Garden."



## CHAPTER XIV

### A NIGHT OF HORROR.

**B**UT my friends were *not* waiting for me at "The Garden." "The Garden" was not open to-night on account of the storm ; there was no carriage in waiting. Doubtless, my friends had changed their mind on account of the tempest, taking it for granted that the tempest had changed my mind, too.

I comprehended the situation in a moment, and I cursed it. In my desperation I raised my arm wildly toward the black sky and cursed my fate, which seemed as black. Where I had so confidently expected to find light and human companionship, and comfort, and assistance, I found but darkness, loneliness, and the howling storm.

Why had I not taken the storm into my calculations before I escaped ? I wished myself back in my cell—better a prisoner than such a fugitive.

I was drenched, desolate ; my feet were bleeding by

this time ; my pantaloons clung saturated to my limbs. I was exquisitely wretched. I determined to return to the *maison de santé*.

Yet, why return ? I could not get into the place before the morning probably. Who would hear my cries from the outside in such a tempest ? Who would heed them ? I would die before the dawn.

Then my mind changed. If I must perish, better perish on the outside of a prison. I had started out to reach Paris that night—I would reach Paris, or die.

Just at that moment a Paris-bound train went thundering by. There was another train for the metropolis which stopped at Sceaux-sur-Seine at half-past one in the morning—an hour from now. Why not wait and take that train ?

Even in my misery I laughed aloud—laughed at my own folly. How could such a wretch as I dream of taking a train to convey my worthless carcass anywhere ?

I had not a sou in my pocket.

Besides, they would not allow me on the train in my present plight—a man without hat, coat, vest, or shoes—a wet, dirty, ragged, bleeding, foot-sore pauper. The train people, the passengers, would see at once that I was a fugitive ; they would see at once that I was either a lunatic or a criminal. No, no ; no railroad train for me. I must get to Paris some other way, and there was no other way than to walk.

Oh ! heaven and earth ! what a night to walk in. But, nevertheless, I walked. I did not reason or calculate ; had I done either I would never have thought of reaching Paris in my present condition, under present circumstances.

Seventeen miles in a dark, stormy night, alone and barefoot ! I would have abandoned the attempt had I estimated distances or weighed probabilities, or took into consideration the facts ; but I walked on.

I was wet to the skin ; but I walked on along the railroad track, groping my way.

I was ravenously hungry, probably because I was so utterly weak—yet I walked on.

I was terribly thirsty ; I was burning up with inward fever—yet I walked on. I managed to assuage my thirst somewhat by swallowing the raindrops, but the gnawing at my stomach was something agonizing.

I was chilled to the marrow ; I had a racking headache ; my very soul ached—yet I walked on.

My feet, unused to hardships, were not only bleeding, but swollen ; my stockings were useless ; I had tramped out their soles, leaving only wet rags around my ankles—yet I walked on.

Once I tumbled down a gully ; once I stumbled on a stone, severely injuring myself each time—still I walked on, keeping as close as I could to the line of the railway, yet avoiding the lights along the way,

and shunning the chance of meeting any of the railroad people, lest I should be stopped.

I walked on for three or four hours—exactly how long I shall never know—three or four hours that seemed to me then, that seem to me now, as so many centuries of torture.

I must have tottered along and gained six miles or so of the seventeen which separated me from Paris when I saw a train approaching me Paris bound.

As I looked at the advancing monster a strange, horrible, yet fearfully fascinating, idea seized me. That rapidly-advancing monster could make itself in a minute my supreme benefactor; it could give me rest, ay, for it could give me death.

I had only to plant myself in its way, only to lie down, only to wait, and then, doubtless, ere I was fully aware of what was taking place, all would be over. I would suffer assuredly, but only for a moment; there would be a crushing and a crunching, a mangling and a tearing, some writhing and groaning, and then the earthly sorrows of H. T. Helmbold would be ended.

I laid myself down on the track and waited for the coming of the train.

My first sensation was of delight, physical joy at the rest and repose of my position; terrible as was my bed, I was no longer walking.

I stretched my limbs luxuriously, slightly altering

my position on the track. The rain beat on my prostrate form, but I was so wet that it mattered not now. I closed my eyes. The train came nearer me ; I could hear its increasing roar.

I thought, in my rags, of my wife in her luxurious quarters in Paris ; I thought, as I lay there an outcast awaiting a horrible death, of my children sleeping sweetly at that moment ; I prayed to God to bless them—and me—for in a moment I would need his blessing.

But where was the train all this time ? Why had it not reached me ere this, and got rid of me ? I heard no longer its gigantic rumble.

I raised myself from the track ; I looked around me ; there was a bright light near me, but it was moving slowly and more slowly. At last its motion ceased altogether ; the train had stopped.

To this day I do not know the reason why that train stopped ; I think it was something connected with the engine—I know that the train people were fussing around the locomotive for some time—but I am not certain ; I never asked.

All I do know is that with this providential interposition (for such it was) in my favor an intense desire for life came upon me, a desire as intense as my previous disgust. I resolved to make the intended instrument of my destruction the vehicle of my safety. A new vitality seemed to take possession of me, to

enter my veins. I rose from the track ; I felt as vigorous as though I had not been at the verge of death. I crept swiftly but silently alongside of the train ; I attracted no attention, but contrived to get on the rear car.

The train started ; I held fast. I had conquered fate ; my assassin was now my slave ; it was carrying me to Paris. In this fact I forgot all my cold, hunger, thirst, nakedness, bodily injuries, and fatigue. I was being borne along without any exertion at a rate ten times faster than I would have walked had I strained every muscle.

After a night of horror I reached Paris.





## CHAPTER XV.

“HOME, SWEET HOME.”

**B**UT though within the limits of the French capital, I was by no means at the end of my perplexities. It was not yet dawn, and I knew not what to do with myself. I could not traverse the streets of Paris in my present condition—I had no money, no clothes.

Naturally enough, one of the French police enquired who I was, and what I was doing abroad at that hour and in that condition. I trumped up a story for the occasion, which, by another special providence—so it seemed to me—passed current with the official.

Wandering along the lonely streets, beginning, now that the worst of my troubles were apparently past, to feel the inevitable reaction, faint and weary exceedingly, I came to a wine-shop—a rather disreputable-looking place, which was evidently one of the sort “open all night.”

A number of men were in this shop, drinking and carousing—rough-looking men, yet not ruffians. I entered the place; but, as I evidently was not a desirable customer, the proprietor would have expelled me had not one of the men remonstrated with him, saying to him: “Give the poor devil some wine; I’ll pay for it.”

I looked at the speaker, took a glass of about the very worst wine I had ever tasted, and then thanked my new friend to the best of my imperfect ability.

The liberal-minded stranger was a workman, but one of the better class, and I liked his face; so I determined to utilize him in my emergency. I contrived to make him understand that I had been “on a spree” all night, and had been robbed and maltreated. I had not a sou, but my friends would reward any one who would bring me home. Would he not get me a carriage and take me home? When I reached home I would settle for the carriage, and would amply recompense him for his trouble. He believed my second story, just as the police officer had believed my first, and soon procured me a conveyance.

My new friend and impromptu agent and myself entered the carriage, and I told the driver to conduct me as rapidly as possible to No. 5 Rue Scribe.

At about six o’clock the carriage stopped before the designated address. Calling lustily, the driver, my

companion, and myself contrived, by our joint lungs, to awake the principal inmate of this establishment, who was none other than my friend, Mr. Raymond, previously mentioned.

Mr. Raymond at once arose, and admitted me and my companion. He also, when I explained the state of affairs, admitted my driver, and, setting the two men down to some meat and wine, which they partook of with a relish, he led me upstairs, gave me dry linen, and insisted upon my going to bed and sleeping. After bathing, attending to my poor feet, and eating something, I yielded to exhausted nature, and slept (like a child, they told me) all the day long, till the evening.

My friend Raymond acted splendidly. He rewarded my acquaintance of the wine-shop liberally, settled for my carriage, kept my arrival at his house a profound secret—save to mutual friends—and treated me in my trouble as a man would treat his brother.

I recuperated rapidly, and in twenty-four hours I was “all right.” The exposure I had undergone would have killed most men, but I am like an old turkey—“very tough.”

Next morning a consultation of several of my personal friends took place at my friend Raymond’s; and it was finally determined then I should start at once for England, and should remain there. I wanted to linger in Paris; I preferred the French capital to

the English ; but my friends told me, seriously, that if I persisted in remaining in Paris it must be at my own risk ; they were becoming tired of taking trouble constantly on my account. So I promised to cross the Channel, and fulfilled my word.

I borrowed a small sum of money for my travelling expenses ; made no attempt to see my family (as had I taken the risk of bidding them “good-by,” I would have been, in all probability, discovered by my enemies) ; wrote my wife and children letters of farewell, and crossed over to England.

I was taken sick crossing the Channel, but I found some kind friends—Mr. Hall, of the Metropolitan Hotel ; and Mr. Kenton, of the Prescott House, New York—who took care of me, and, arriving in London, I drove straight to the Langham Hotel.

This famous establishment became my headquarters ; and, in order to fully secure myself against any possible further trouble, I made an arrangement with Mr. C. M. Laffin (the well-known gymnast and muscular model, who recently appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, as *Charles, the Wrestler*, in “As You Like It”), to be my companion and protector. Mr. Laffin was not only a man of muscle, but a clever fellow, and fulfilled his part of our arrangement in the most satisfactory manner. While with him I was never molested.

I enjoyed myself hugely in England after I had

once made up my mind to live there. I entertained largely, and I was largely entertained. Among my social acquaintances I included such personages as Mr. Beaumont, one of the richest commoners in England, and Lord Ashbury; and I also met many Americans of note—P. T. Barnum, William B. Florence, etc.

I attended the races, and, with my usual luck, won largely. I also dabbled in various speculations, which were generally fortunate. I cleared two thousand pounds in a day by an investment in wines. I spent my money as fast as I made (or received) it, and lived, as I always have lived when I had my own way, on the fat of the land.

Now and then I would run over to Paris for a day or two; but I never trusted myself in the French capital any length of time; and, although I was not interfered with, I hastened back to London. I was learning gradually to prefer London to Paris.

My family ere this had returned to America. I began to feel lonely, even in my luxurious freedom. So one day, following my mind, without saying a word to any one, I made the necessary arrangements, and left England, *en route* for America, per Cunard steamer. Favored with a swift and pleasant voyage, I arrived in Boston, remained there a week, receiving hundreds of calls, and then took the Boston line of steamers for Philadelphia.

I reached the far-famed Quaker City without misadventure ; and so, after four years' absence, after having been imprisoned several times in various foreign asylums, and having escaped as often as I was imprisoned, I stood at last a free, and, I certainly believe, a sane, man in the streets of the Christian city of Philadelphia, where I had been born, where my wife had been reared, where my parents lived—"Home, Sweet Home."



## CHAPTER XVI.

“THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.”

**I**CAN safely and truthfully state I landed in America with the very kindest possible feelings toward my fellow-beings in general and my family in particular. I am not a man to cherish grudges ; I do not believe “in chewing the cud of the past” ; “let the dead past bury its dead.” I bore no malice towards any one in reference to my troubles abroad, my imprisonments in France. They were unjust, certainly, and somebody, assuredly, was responsible for them ; but I was willing to forget them and forgive them. I felt the better for my years of absence from America. Spite of my persecutions I had, on the whole, enjoyed life. My free, untrammelled career in England had done me good. I was ready to settle down to work again, and to make another fortune.

Looking at life in this way, I entered Philadelphia, at peace with myself and all the world. I went



straightway to my mother's residence on Filbert Street, and found my parents in good health and spirits; I also found that my wife and children were well and happy. I slept that night, for the first time for many years, under my mother's roof.

The next morning I removed my quarters to the Continental Hotel. The news of my return had been bruited about by this time, and hosts of business and personal friends called upon me that morning. I was interviewed by a correspondent of the *Philadelphia Daily Times*; other newspaper men called to see me. I began to feel like the war-horse who scents the preparations for battle. Notoriety and advertising were to me the breath of my nostrils.

I attended the Chestnut Street Theatre in the evening, and after the performance returned to my mother's house for the night, in preference to occupying my room at the hotel.

The next morning I arose remarkably early, feeling remarkably bright. I sent out and purchased all the morning papers, including the *Times*, and read the news, and what the journals said about me.

While in the midst of this (to me) most delightful occupation, and just as I was beginning to feel hungry, and to hope that the bell would soon ring for breakfast, the servant-girl entered the room, and said that two men waited below in the hall and wished to see me on important business.



“What on earth do they want with me?” I asked impatiently.

“Faith, and you had better ask them that,” replied the servant-girl.

I accepted the hint, and, holding my paper in my hand, descended into the hall.

I found two rough-looking men standing by the hall-door. As soon as they saw me one of the men stepped up to me, and, tapping me on the shoulder and showing me a document, said it was a warrant for my arrest.

I was dumbfounded; not thirty-six hours in my native city and arrested!

“On what charge?” I merely asked.

“For being drunk and disorderly in West Philadelphia last night,” replied the man.

I was stupefied with amazement. What on earth did the man mean? I had *not* been drunk or disorderly the night before. I remembered positively coming home comparatively early and sober. As for West Philadelphia, I had not been in that section of the city for seven years to my certain knowledge. There must be some terrible mistake here. I explained the facts of the case to the two men, but they were inexorable, though calm.

“Very probably,” said one of the men, “there *was* a mistake.” In that case, all I had to do was to explain the circumstances to the local magistrate in

West Philadelphia before whom it was their duty to take me instantly. If I could prove my innocence, or an *alibi*, all would be right. Meanwhile, they must do their duty, and were prepared to do it at all hazards.

At this moment one of my brothers came into the hall, and I explained the matter to him. He seemed surprised, protested against "the outrage" (though, I am now inclined to think, rather feebly), and finally advised me to make no trouble, but to go with the officers quietly. Both my brother and myself assumed these men were "officers," for we never demanded to see their shields or official authority. "When you get to the police office you can set yourself right," said my brother. "But you certainly ought to get there as quickly as you can, and get the matter over as quickly as possible."

I took his advice, made no resistance, forgot all about my breakfast, and walked between my two captors into a carriage which was in waiting.

The carriage drove off rapidly. In a few moments it crossed the bridge over the Schuylkill River, and we were in West Philadelphia. We drove on till we came to an enclosure surrounded by a high wall. My first experience of a *maison de santé* in Paris rushed to my mind; in an instant I did what I ought to have done before—comprehended the situation.

"Is this another job?" I asked of my captors.

They pretended not to understand me. They gave me no answer, but grasped me, each by an arm.

"You are trying to make me out insane, are you not?" I enquired; then, without waiting for a reply, I continued, "It has often been tried before, but always in vain. I am not crazy, and you know it."

"We've got you, anyway," said one of the men, "and we've got two doctors' certificates. Two doctors say you're insane, and your friends wish you to be taken care of; that ought to be enough for you—it is enough for us."

The carriage entered the enclosure. We drove up to a large and rather imposing building. It was an insane asylum, one of the "institutions" of Philadelphia.

I was taken out of the carriage and led into the house. I was handed over to the doctor of the institution. I demanded to see the doctors' certificates on the strength of which I was consigned to the tender mercies of this place. I was shown the precious documents. The names attached to them were those of a physician with whom I was very slightly acquainted, who had paid me a merely personal call at the Continental Hotel the day before, like a hundred others of my acquaintances, and who had stayed in my presence but a very few minutes, and another physician of whom I had never heard at all. I subsequently ascertained that this latter physician had

never examined me at all, had only acted from "hear-say." Neither physician had attained any eminence in their profession, neither physician was qualified in the slightest degree to pronounce as to my mental condition ; yet, on the strength of their certificates, I had been torn from my family on a trumped-up charge, and was now separated from the world, and herded with lunatics as one of their number.

No wonder I protested strongly, no wonder I became excited while I was protesting ; any man living would in my place have been as excited as I was. But my natural excitement was perverted against me ; it was construed as a proof of my unsound mental condition. The doctor of the institution summoned one of the "keepers," and, without further ado, I was carried into the interior of the building, and thrown—literally thrown—into a dark little room, the door of which was locked upon me.

Within forty-eight hours after my arrival in my native city, without any cause, without any examination, I was pronounced insane, and locked up in a lunatic asylum ; and this was in Philadelphia—my home !

Ah ! as the poet says truthfully :

"There is no place like home."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### TURNING THE TABLES.

**I**T is an old saying that familiarity breeds contempt. But my familiarity with insane asylums had not bred within me any contempt for them. I did not despise them; I dreaded them—dreaded them now more than I had at first.

But I had become an old hand at escaping by this time. I began to pride myself on the facility with which I eluded the designs of those who would fain imprison me. So, ere I had fully recovered from my surprise and indignation at this last arrest, I commenced to form plans for my escape.

I subdued my excitement, triumphed over my nervousness, conciliated my keepers, did no more “protesting,” and gave the people of “the institution” evidently less trouble than they had expected. By this course of conduct I contrived to gain permission to see visitors; and, with one of these visitors, I arranged to apply for a writ of *habeas corpus*, through Mr. Clarence Derringer, the lawyer.

But I was relieved from the necessity of applying to law or taking "leg-bail" just then, for my wife took compassion on me, and received permission from the authorities of "the institution" to carry me with her to Long Branch, where she was then residing, provided she also took a "keeper" with me, who would be responsible to "the institution" for my return in case of trouble; in other words, I was allowed "out on a furlough." The theory was maintained that I was still *non compos mentis*, only that there was no danger to be apprehended from my being at large, provided that I was "watched."

I ought to have protested against this "theory," I know, but I hated confinement. I wanted my liberty, and did not care how I obtained it. So I told my wife that I would not attempt to leave her, that I would submit to a nominal "keeper," and then went with my family to Long Branch.

It was now about the middle of September, and still warm. "The season was over at the shore," but the Mansion House and several of the smaller hotels were still open, "the cottagers" still lingered, and hundreds of people still tarried till the latter portion of the month.

I still owned, or my wife did, an elegant cottage at Long Branch, and there I went a semi-prisoner, as a half-lunatic, with a "keeper."

It was an odd position.

My "keeper," too, was odd. He was a raw Irishman, fresh from Cork. He was as near a fool as it was possible for a man to be without absolutely being an idiot. He was, of course, utterly illiterate, and had never been in "society" in his life. His hair was red; his nose was red; his eyes were red; his hands were red. He did not know how to walk genteelly, nor how to talk, and his clothes were coarse, shabby, dirty. Yet this was the man who was to accompany me to a fashionable watering-place, and to associate with my family, my beautiful wife, her elegant sister, and their fashionable friends, on necessarily familiar terms, as the "keeper" of their semi-crazy husband, brother-in-law, and host, though how on earth such a creature as this was ever chosen keeper or guardian of anybody was a mystery. He was not fit to take care of himself, to say nothing of taking care of a man supposed to be of unsound mind. The very appointment of such a man as a "keeper" was a satire on the institution which appointed him.

He had only two redeeming qualities—he was physically strong, and he was faithful. And these were just the very qualities I could have dispensed with—in him. He bothered the life out of me, and rendered himself a nuisance to my family and friends. Wherever I went he insisted on going with me. Imagine how pleasant it was to take a ride along the bluffs



with my wife, my children, my visitors, and this raw Irishman! Imagine how charming it was to take a promenade on the beach with a friend, and this uncouth native of Cork! Fancy how delightful it was to eat a meal with this rough hobbledohoy at your elbow! Fancy what it was to go to "a hop" in the evening with this wild Irishman as one of your party!

Apropos of "a hop," I remember one laughable incident in this peculiar episode of my strange history distinctly. My "keeper," like all true Irishmen, had a weakness for whiskey, and one day he had yielded to its seductions more freely than usual. He had been out with me in a boat crabbing in Pleasure Bay that afternoon, and had patronized, at my expense, Price's bar. I was hoping that I had got rid of him for the evening, and that he had retired to his room for the night, to sleep off his potations; so I dressed myself for "a ball" at the Mansion that evening, and accompanied my wife and several other ladies, in full evening dress, to the hotel. I was just about to lead off with my wife in a quadrille when I heard a commotion, and I felt a hand laid heavily on my shoulder. Looking up, I saw my wild Irishman of a keeper. It was he who had caused the stir. His hand was on my shoulder arresting the dance.

"What do you want?" I asked, annoyed beyond measure.

Of course, the constant presence of my keeper with



me had, ere this, become a topic of discussion at Long Branch, but I had pooh-pooled the matter as much as possible, and kept it in the background. Now, however, it was obtruding itself, and I was becoming ridiculous.

"Oh ! I want you," answered my wild Irishman. "It is eight o'clock ; you must go to bed." Everybody laughed. I was raging. I looked at the man. He was dead drunk. He was staggering under his load of liquor. He fancied that he was at Kirkbride's, and that he was putting me to bed, as was his custom at that institution.

"Come, doctor, you must go to bed ; it's after eight o'clock." Everybody laughed again, but as my keeper was drunk then, and I was sober, I saw my advantage, and took it. I excused myself from the dancers a moment. I went out with my man into the hall. I summoned two of the waiters, and then wended my way upstairs with my drunken keeper into *his* room. With a little management I contrived to put *him* to bed instead of his putting me ; then I locked him in his room, instead of his locking me, and having thus "turned the tables" on him, I re-entered the ball-room and told my version of the story with extreme unction. He laughs best who laughs last, and the last laugh on this occasion was on my side.

But I grew weary of my enforced companionship

with my wild Irishman. I grew ashamed of my false and impossible position as a semi-lunatic; I remonstrated with my family, but as soon as I remonstrated I was one morning coaxed into a carriage and taken to the depot, then taken on board the train to Philadelphia, and then conveyed from the depot in a carriage to the asylum once more.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PERSONALITIES AND POINTS.

**Q**UONCE more in the asylum, I set myself at work once more to escape from the asylum. I escaped my next time, however, by due process of law. I appealed to the Philadelphia courts—not to my own legs.

By dint of keeping quiet and conciliating the officials, I was permitted to see my friends occasionally, and through them I set in motion the machinery of a writ of *habeas corpus*.

By virtue of this writ I was ultimately brought into court, examined, permitted to testify in my own behalf, and to badger the doctors who were, in the interest of certain parties and of the asylum, trying to prove me insane.

I questioned and cross-questioned these doctors as to the difference between, and the characteristics of, mania, monomania, sanity, hallucination, eccentricity, insanity, etc. I put them through their cate-

chism on these points until they were sick of me. I asked them, through my lawyer, if they had read certain books on the brain, and then, when they replied in the affirmative, I told the court that no such books had ever been written. I completely confused them; and although their professed views of my mental condition may have been sincere and honest as far as they were themselves concerned, they were not able to impress them upon the court, for I was decided to be a sane man, and, as such, was relieved at once from all further imprisonment.

This decision of the courts gave me a temporary breathing-spell, and while free I took, with my family, a trip to Newport. There I met Mr. James Gordon Bennett. His name had been associated with my family affairs for some time in an unpleasant way, without the slightest foundation in fact. Mr. Bennett took occasion, like a gentleman, to deny all the reports which had been "floating around," and his frank conduct in this respect deserves my acknowledgment.

I may here remark also that various reports set afloat concerning my relations with John Chamberlain are as baseless as those in relation to Mr. Bennett. I have never lost any large sum of money at cards at Chamberlain's, nor did I ever refuse to pay any of my debts of honor.

As for my giving a draft to the proprietor of the

Ocean House, Newport, for board which was not paid, it was all a mistake ; and, although I was locked up without cause a while, the draft was paid, and I was released. I never should have been confined.

I may here also take occasion to remark that at different periods of my life, since my return to America, I have yielded to a temporary indulgence in spirituous liquors, and that occasion has been taken by my enemies to construe these periodical "sprees" —which soon pass off, leaving my mind clearer than before—into fits of madness. I do not defend my course in this respect. I simply state a fact ; and I simply state another fact when I aver that I cannot help these occasional "sprees." They are the safety-valves by which I work off my superabundant mental and nervous "steam." But my ill-wishers and ignorant people have taken it for granted that Doctor Helmbold was crazy, when Doctor Helmbold was nothing of the kind.

Nor have the doctors who have at different times examined me ever been able, it would seem, to distinguish permanent insanity from temporary intoxication, although I have shown my own appreciation of the difference by preferring, on one occasion, a cell in Moyamensing Prison, on the ground of being a brawler, to a cell in an asylum, on pretence of being a lunatic.

But, returning to the direct thread of my personal

adventures, I have only to say that the doctors, such as they were, and my enemies, whoever they were, triumphed over me at last ; for, after a brief spell of freedom, I was taken back to the asylum, and, as I believe, on the old medical certificates which had already served their purposes in my first arrest.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### HOW I LEAPED OUT OF AN INSANE ASYLUM.

**I**T will, I trust, be unnecessary to assure the readers of these adventures that from the very moment I was brought back to the asylum it was the determination of my soul at all hazards to escape ; nor would I any more appeal to the law. *Habeas corpus* was not so available a means of freedom as one's own brains and body. What was the use of going through all the forms and being pronounced by the courts sane, if, any time after the decision in your favor, anybody could lock you up again ? Only those deserve to be free who free themselves ; so I set to work to see how I could free myself.

My hope was in my keepers. Most of them were, as one would suppose, naturally enough, rough and brutal men—just the very men for their peculiar business—but my special guardian luckily chanced to be a rather fine specimen of the native Irishman, and very conscientious. I ascertained this fact by offering to

bribe him. He did not seem to be angry at me for making him the offer, probably he did not consider me at the time a responsible being; but he refused the money, and from that moment I knew my man and what to do with him.

I saw that he was extraordinarily conscientious, and more than ordinarily intelligent; so I threw myself on his generosity; I made him my confidant, and told him my history.

I satisfied him of my perfect sanity, and convinced him that, whoever might be, or might not be, responsible for it, my imprisonment in a lunatic asylum was an outrage.

This much being gained, the rest was easy.

Having once convinced my conscientious man that I ought not to be inside the asylum, I soon managed to convince him that I ought to be outside of it. In short, in a little while he was as anxious to let me out of the place as I was myself to get out of it. When two men, prisoner and keeper, are of one mind, their joint purpose is soon accomplished.

One bright summer's day, during the morning half-hour of exercise in the garden, I was permitted to disappear. I vanished forthwith into a sort of cave which was behind the barns. This cave I had discovered the second or third day of my arrival, and I had always kept it in mind as "exceeding snug." Its origin I do not know; nor its precise use, if it had



any ; but I do know that it was of the utmost service to me this entire day—from eleven o'clock in the morning till after sunset. If I had hidden in the barn or anywhere else around the place, somebody would have come across me (accidentally, of course, as, thanks to my conscientious keeper, I was not missed), but here in the cave I was safely obscure, though I soon became most confoundedly hungry and thirsty. About evening, in fact, I was almost on the point of giving up my idea of escaping just then, and exchanging my chance of freedom for the certainty of a meal ; but my pluck restrained me, and I resolved never to eat or drink till I did both outside the walls of this cursed place.

At eight o'clock in the evening they were in the habit of letting loose in the grounds a huge bulldog, of whom I entertained a most wholesome terror. He would have delighted, I believe, in tearing a man to pieces. So just a few minutes before eight I emerged from my cave, at the risk of being seen by somebody or other, and made my way in the twilight to a tree which stood pretty near a corner of the wall. This tree I climbed with considerable difficulty, being by no means agile, and hid among the branches, which, as I am small, I could do more easily than most men.

It is one thing to sit among the foliage on a summer's night with one's sweetheart "in one's arms," but it is quite another thing to sit high up in the

foliage half the night by yourself, feeling very tired, and, spite of your exposed position and your perils, very sleepy, yet running the risk, if you fall asleep, of also falling into the jaws of a bull-mastiff, who would make mince-meat of you.

How long that night seemed ! There must have been say one hundred and sixty minutes in every hour, and one hundred and sixty seconds to every minute. Nine o'clock came. My conscientious keeper must have gone through the form of locking my cell-door, and putting the key in his pocket. Ten o'clock ; my conscientious keeper had handed in his nightly report, having gone his last round, and no one could know now of my absence till the morning. Eleven o'clock, and the lights were all extinguished, all save those starlights of the never-sleeping. It was about time for me to take my last chance, to descend from my leafy seat, and to cross to the wall and climb it, if I could. The *wall* was more irregular and somewhat lower just at this particular corner than anywhere else, somewhat more easily mounted here therefore, though even here an ascent would have cost me all my powers, and would involve me in great danger of detection. But I had no choice. After all, my great danger was the bulldog. If I could elude his scent and his fangs for a few moments, all might yet be well.

I let myself fall from the tree, and ran for the wall.

I heard a howl which made my blood run cold. That devil of a bulldog had seen me, or had smelt me out. I shuddered with terror ; already I fancied I felt his teeth at my throat.

I ran, as never in my life had I ran before, not to the wall, but back to the tree ; I could climb the tree quicker than I could the wall—I knew it better now.

In less time than it takes to record the fact I had reascended the tree ; but the brute was howling and leaping like mad underneath ; he would soon attract the attention of the watchman ; I would be found and taken. There was but one thing to do.

The tree was a good distance from the wall ; still, it was fairly possible that a gymnast might swing himself, with a flying leap, from the tree to the wall. I was no gymnast, but I was a desperate man, and I took a desperate chance. I was somewhat higher on the branch on which I was standing than the top of the wall ; I might leap from the branch to the wall-top.

I might, but I did not.

With all my force—with a force with which I would not previously have credited myself—I literally hurled myself from the tree ; but instead of alighting on the top of the wall, as I had hoped, and from thence, in another leap, springing to the ground, I involuntarily took the two leaps in one.

My jump not only carried me to the wall, but be-

yond it, and I fell to the ground, outside the wall, dazed and bruised. For a moment I was stunned; but I recovered, and, somehow or other, found strength to run, or rather to limp, on.

I heard the dog barking furiously on the other side of the wall, but I was not pursued. Probably, there being no gate in that vicinity, and the dog, however anxious to bite, not being able to talk, the keepers when they got to the tree did not understand matters. But, at any rate, I was for the night free, and, limping along, I reached in a little while a horse-car, which soon conveyed me to a relative's house, where I obtained shelter.



## CHAPTER XX.

### HOW I WAS TAKEN BACK TO A MADHOUSE.

**I**N my relative's residence I felt comparatively safe, and I had reason to feel so; I resolved not to leave its hospitable refuge until I had again invoked the protection of the law, not this time to procure, but to retain, my freedom. I wrote, therefore, the very next morning after my escape, a letter to a lawyer, asking him to call upon me in reference to my matters, and then I devoted myself to rest and to the society of my relatives.

There were several children in the house, and I soon made myself a favorite with "the small fry." We indulged in all sorts of games, and, in the innocent companionship of the children, I was enabled for a while to forget my troubles.

Two or three days passed on, and I still remained in the house.

I had heard from my lawyer, though I had not yet seen him. Meanwhile, there were two suspicious-

looking men lurking round the house—so the maid-servant said.

I suspected who the men might be; they were probably in the employ of the asylum or of my enemies.

My escape had become known, and this house, as being one of my probable hiding-places, was watched.

Still I felt safe; why should I not? I was no criminal, no madman.

I charged the servant-maid on no account to admit strangers into the house, and kept on with my games, playing with the children.

One morning the children, an aged female relative, and myself were together in the house, the males of the family and the mistress of the household being absent, when the maid-servant opened the yard-gate to dump some dirt into the street. A maid-servant of an adjoining house was occupied in a similar pleasing task, and the two Abigails, naturally enough, joined forces and tongues for a little friendly gossip. So interested were they in their chat that they did not see two men, who had been loitering around, suddenly enter our yard and quietly steal through the back-door into the house.

I did not see the two men enter, but I subsequently ascertained that they must have entered this way.

All I saw was this: I was carrying one of the children piggy-back—I being on all fours and the child straddling me, my aged relative looking on and en-

joying the fun—when the door of the room in which we were playing opened, and two men stood before me. The children screamed, my aged relative was startled, and I arose to my feet. I understood the situation. I knew resistance was in vain.

“We have come to take you back to the asylum, Doctor,” said one of the men, “and you had better go with us quietly.”

I felt more concerned for my aged female relative than for myself. At her time of life a violent scene would have killed her.

Then the children—did the little darlings imagine that any evil was intended me, or did they see me violently resisting violence, they would have grieved bitterly. She and they must be protected from a shock.

So I made light of the matter, stated that I had business with these gentlemen, left the children in the care of the maid-servant, who remembered my instructions about letting in no strangers now that the strangers were already in, and walked down-stairs with the two men as quietly as though they were my brothers.

But when I reached the yard-door I opened it (in less time, I guess, than it had ever been opened before), and I dashed down the little street at the rear of the house as though I were a *Herald* lightning express train.



The men, of course, dashed after me ; and as they were bigger men, with longer legs, they gained upon me. Suddenly I turned, wheeled right round, tripped up my pursuers, and dashed back again to the house. But my pursuers were too much for me—or, rather, I was too little for myself—my strength failed me ; I panted at the threshold of the yard-door, stumbled, and fell.

In a moment I was in the hands of two men—and strong hands they were. In another moment I was hurled into a carriage that had been all this time in waiting. Another minute, and I was whirling along toward the asylum. A small crowd had collected and witnessed my flight and my capture. But, in their eyes, I was only what the two men said I was — “an escaped lunatic.” There was no help for me.

The carriage drove furiously to the asylum gate. The gate was opened, and the carriage drove furiously to the asylum doors. Then the carriage-door was opened, and I was pulled and dragged into the institution ; and, once within the place, I was forthwith hurled into “a dark cell.” Said one of the asylum officials to another : “We will cure him of his mania for escapes.”





## CHAPTER XXI.

“THE DARK CELL” AND THE DARKER CELLAR.—  
FAILURES AND SUCCESSES.



PROBABLY none of my readers have ever been put into “a dark cell,” and kept there. In that case they do not know as much concerning “the exact nature of hell” as I do.

Now, of course there must be punishments in a lunatic asylum, I suppose, as in every other place; and if a supposed lunatic will escape every chance he gets, of course every method must be taken of “curing him” of escaping. And, particularly bear it in mind, I am not calling anybody names, or finding fault with anything; but I must state facts.

And the facts about the “dark cell” into which I was now thrown, and in which I was confined for about two weeks, are these: It is a dark, almost coal-black, hole—or, rather, there is no hole or aperture in it; it is wretchedly ventilated, if it can be said to be

ventilated at all; it is foul and filthy, with a rotting floor and no furniture but a straw mattress. The stench is terrible. Certainly, my fortnight in this cell ought to have cured me of escaping; but such is the perversity of human nature that it made me more determined to escape than ever.

Generally I have been fortunate in my attempts to escape, as my readers can, by this time, bear witness; but for a while, at this period of my history, my attempts proved failures.

On one occasion I hid in the cellar for a day and a night, thinking ultimately to escape into the garden, and from thence into the world outside. But, after lingering hours of almost suffocation in the coal-bin—which was, if possible, blacker and darker than “the dark cell” itself—I was detected.

On another occasion I attempted flight at night. A kind attendant left the door of my room open, and, although I could not contrive to carry with me either hat, or coat, or boots, these having been taken away from me before I had been nominally “locked up for the night,” I managed to steal out into the grounds with my pantaloons and in my stockings. I got half-way to a certain gate, which I thought I could contrive to climb, when, lo! the bulldog, whose jaws I had so narrowly escaped that night up the tree, discovered me, darted for me, overtook me, and half devoured me before I was rescued from his fangs.

On a third occasion I tried a very bold game, which ought to have been successful from its very boldness. I took my chances of being recognized, and, in broad daylight, strolled about the grounds as though I was a visitor, joined a party of visitors, and was just about to walk out of the gate, as a visitor, when one of the keepers saw me and defeated my design.

After each of these futile attempts at escape I was severely punished, so that existence was at this period by no means *couleur de rose*.

But finally I did escape. I cannot give the details of this successful attempt, for the doing so would involve the party who befriended me in trouble. Suffice it to say that the friendly party was one in high authority in the institution, to whom I will ever cherish a debt of gratitude.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### JERSEY JUSTICE.

**H**AVING effected my escape from the mad-house, I straightway hied me to the depot, and took the cars for Long Branch. While pursuing my journey to "our summer capital," a happy idea occurred to me. I had the honor of the personal acquaintance of his Excellency Joel Parker, Governor of New Jersey, who resided at Freehold. I would call upon the Governor, state the circumstances of my case to him, assure him of my sanity, and, having done so, obtain from him the protection of the State against any attempt which might be made to kidnap me while I was within its borders.

I had been educated in a wholesome respect for Jersey law, and, if its weight was enlisted on my side, I firmly felt that I, even poor, persecuted, hunted Helmbold, would, for a while at least, be safe. So I went to Freehold, but, alas! his excellency was absent.

"Just my luck!" I ejaculated, and was about to

abandon my idea of appealing to the Jersey authorities when by accident I encountered my old friend, Mr. William H. Conover, the then District-Attorney of Monmouth County. "He will do as well as the Governor," thought I. So I at once told my story, enlisted his sympathies, and secured his official protection.

Sheltered with this, and favored with the company of Mr. Conover, who was himself going on a visit to Long Branch, I went on my way rejoicing, and was soon "beside the sounding sea"—to borrow a phrase from the ancients.

I registered at the Ocean Hotel, and was kindly received by my old acquaintances, the Lelands. I also received friendly greetings from many of the guests of the house.

The day after my arrival I attended the races, and, with my customary pecuniary luck, won a considerable sum of money. Returning from the races to dinner at the hotel, I noticed on the piazza as I alighted from my carriage a Philadelphia detective who had previously figured in one of my arrests.

After dinner I noticed this detective prowling around the hotel; and, as I remained at the Ocean House that evening, and visited no other hotel, I observed that the detective likewise remained at the Ocean House, and visited none of the other hotels at the Branch.

The next morning I arose very early (it was a delicious morning), took a stroll on the beach—not the bluffs, but the beach itself. Returning from my walk and ascending the steps leading—in front of the Ocean Hotel—from the beach to the bluffs, I encountered at the head of the steps the detective. He looked at me meaningly, and I looked meaningly at him—and at the man who stood a little behind him, and at the wagon which stood in the road a little behind this man.

“We’ve come for you again, Doctor,” said the detective.

I knew he had. I cursed my infernal folly in taking a stroll so early by myself. I looked around me; no one was in sight, “our summer capital” had not yet risen. The huge “Ocean Hotel” looked like a deserted barn as yet. There was no one on the road. There was no one on the beach. There were two men standing at my side, and a third man waiting within call, and there were two horses ready to take me anywhere. True, I had the laws of the State of New Jersey for my protection, but Mr. Conover, who represented this State and these laws, was probably soundly sleeping at this very moment.

To make my story short, the two men seized me, and, spite of my struggles and the laws of the State of New Jersey. they put me into the carriage and drove off.

The carriage whirled along a deserted rural lane for an hour or so, the object evidently being to meet as few vehicles or pedestrians as possible. Then the carriage was ordered to drive to the railroad depot, and I was told that if I made any resistance, or attempted any escape, there would be, in the expressive parlance of the detective, "hell."

I saw the object of my captors. Having diverted attention from me as long as possible, they had now determined to dare everything, and catch the train for Philadelphia, which was now due.

I said nothing. I pretended to be very much frightened at the detective's threats; but I waited for my opportunity, resolved to avail myself of it when it came.

It presented itself different from what I had expected. When we drove up to the depot my captors ascertained, to their intense chagrin, that the train had just gone. They were five minutes too late.

For my part, I noticed two of my friends just leaving the depot, walking back, probably, to the Ocean Hotel for breakfast. I was on the point of raising a yell to attract their attention when a better idea suggested itself to me.

Pretending to be utterly subdued, I humbly asked my captors to get out with me at a little saloon near the depot and partake of refreshments, "I feel so very hungry," I said.



Seeing nothing dangerous in this request, my captors granted it, and entered with me into the saloon.

Now, the proprietor of this saloon and his two bar-keepers were great allies of mine. The moment I got within the place, seeing the three men, I threw myself on their protection—and I received it.

The proprietor and one of the bar-keepers placed me between them, threatening to knock anybody down at once who dared to touch me ; the other bar-keeper wended his way to the Ocean Hotel to see Mr. Conover, with a message from me.

It was my turn now. My captors saw their mistake, but it was too late ; it was as much as they could do to save themselves from punishment for their attempt to kidnap me.

They went back to the carriage, and drove rapidly away—without me.

But I was afterward informed that ere he departed the detective publicly offered, among a crowd of “roughs,” to pay any one a reward of \$500 for my recapture, as an escaped madman.

I knew nothing of this then, however, and I congratulated myself heartily on my success with Jersey saloon-keepers and Jersey justice !





## CHAPTER XXIII.

### JERSEY INJUSTICE.



ENJOYED my freedom for a week or more, passing the time in the varied pleasures of life at a watering-place.

I am like General Grant in more than one respect, and in no point do I more resemble him than in my love for Long Branch. To my mind it is the most charming seaside resort in this country.

I have a great penchant for—for Pleasure Bay; and, like all genuine Long Branchites, I drove to Price's, or to the old Pleasure Bay House, every afternoon, returning often late at night.

At first I always took some male friend with me, to protect me from possible violence on these excursions; but I was never disturbed in any way, and before the week was over I rode or walked backward or forward with or without company, as the case might be, and as might happen to any other man.

I saw Mr. Conover constantly, and he was very

kind. I felt that, so long as he befriended me, I was safe at "the shore," much safer than I would have been at my native town of Philadelphia.

But nobody stays very long at Long Branch. We are all "pilgrims and strangers" at the seaside. "We can tarry, we can tarry but a night." So eight or nine days after my attempted capture and accomplished release Mr. Conover was called by his official duties back to Freehold. I tried to prevail upon him to stay with us a few days more, but in vain. Then my friends tried to persuade *me* to go with Mr. Conover to Freehold, fearing that, after he left the Branch, some trouble might befall me. But I did not share this fear, and pooh-poohed the idea of leaving Long Branch. "What on earth shall I do at Freehold?" I asked; and there was nobody who could answer this question, for the very best friend I had in the world, Mr. Conover himself, for that matter, would be obliged to confess that it was "mighty slow" in Freehold. With all due respect to little Jersey, I must say that its country towns are infernally dull; and Freehold was a conspicuous example of the truth of this statement. Talk about going mad. Why, I verily believe that, once compelled to live for any length of time in a Jersey country town, I would have ended my rural career by a first-class suicide. So I did *not* go to Freehold. For several days subsequent to Mr. Conover's departure nothing worth recording

happened to me at Long Branch. I ate, drank, smoked, drove out, and played cards as usual, and enjoyed existence. I saw nothing of the discomfited detective, and was not molested in any way. I felt what it was at last to be really a free man. I thanked Heaven for "little Jersey."

One evening after dinner I left the Ocean Hotel, and walked, smoking a cigar, to the stables, at the rear of the hotel; from the stables I strolled over to the Mansion House, adjoining the Ocean Hotel, and separated from it only by a lane.

Suddenly I was set upon by several men—just how many men I never knew—but more than three. I was seized, and carried along away from the Mansion House.

I struggled, and then, finding my struggles were in vain, I would have screamed. But ere I could raise an alarm I was gagged; a something was tied round my mouth, and tightened round my face, till I was in infinite danger of being strangled. Meanwhile, I was kicked and cuffed and beaten, as if for the "fun of the thing"—fun to my tormentors though agony to me.

It was now dark, and although there were, of course, many people around the hotels, there were not many persons to be met with along the lane down which my new captors now hurried me.

Once I thought I discerned in the distance one of my friends crossing the road.

Desperately I tore off the gag from my mouth and gave a yell.

My captors turned on me with a diabolical vigor. One man hit me in the mouth with his huge fist, and knocked two of my front teeth down my throat and cut my lips till they bled profusely. Another man readjusted the gag over my mouth and drew it even tighter than before.

A third man kicked me brutally with his thick boots. Something, I think it was a stone, struck me in the eye and temporarily blinded me. I was now utterly helpless, and submitted without further struggle.

Who can resist his fate?—and it seemed to be my destiny to live in a state of constantly being captured.

The warnings of my friends now returned to my mind, and from the bottom of my heart did I wish that I had gone with Mr. Conover to Freehold. Better to pass a few days in dulness than to endure such excitements as this at Long Branch.

I was hurried along, bleeding, blinded, suffering, aching, a mere child in the hands of a crowd of ruffians; I might have been murdered then and there for all I could have done to protect myself. All the law in the State of New Jersey did not avail me then.

Finally, I fell down to the ground, fainting.

“Get up, d—n you!” cried out a voice, and the

voice was supplemented by so brutal a kick that, despite my faint, I sprang to my feet in terror, only to fall to the ground again from sheer weakness.

Again I was kicked, but this time I did not rise, for I could not, so I was lifted from the dust and carried along in the arms of my tormentors.

How I was thus kidnapped in a watering-place like Long Branch, where I was as well known as the liberty-pole, I cannot to this day explain, but all that I know is that when, after my swoon, I recovered my consciousness, I found myself in the "lock-up."

I had committed no offence against the laws; I had harmed no one; but if I had been a murderer I would not have deserved the treatment I received that night.

And if I had been a convicted murderer, I could not have been thrown into a viler place than this "lock-up."

The floor of this place was of damp, dirty stone, the walls were foul; ventilation existed not even in name, for there was no pretence in any way for air to get in or for stench to get out. There was no table, no bed in the den; only a broken chair, and a heap of straw in a corner.

Into this den was I thrown, and in this den was I kept for thirty-six hours—kept without food or drink or attendance of any kind. I was told afterwards

that the report was circulated that I had an attack of delirium tremens and was locked up for safety.

I believe I was delirious for a while. I certainly have but an imperfect recollection of what transpired for the next two or three days, save in isolated facts, as it were.

Thus I remember hearing one man say to another, as I was thrown into the "lock-up" :

"We will learn him how to drive four-in-hands and to put on swell airs."

At which some other man laughed heartily, as if it were a brilliant joke.

Then I remember being fearfully thirsty, and asking "for a glass of water, for the love of God !" I got the water, but it was dirty and warm ; still, I have not forgotten to this moment how deliciously it tasted.

Then I recollect how I threw myself in despair on the floor of my cell, and rolled about in agony of body and mind. I was stifled ; I felt intensely hot ; my bruises from the kicks and cuffs I had received pained me greatly. Tired as I was—terribly exhausted—I could not sleep.

Once again I recollect how one of the men searched me, "going through" my pockets, taking off my coat and vest and examining them. He even took off my boots and felt my stockings. What on earth he was looking for I have not the slightest idea : but whatever it was he did not find it.

Then I remember a man looking at me while I was in one of my "sickest" moods, and saying to another :

"We must get him out of this or the d—d fool will die on our hands !"

Then I recollect being driven to the depot, put into the cars, and finally being "dumped," like a load of wretchedness, into the very asylum from which I had so often escaped.

\* \* \* \* \*

How I suffered in the asylum need not here be stated. How weary the days were need not be dilated upon. How long the nights seemed to me in my imprisonment will readily be imagined. But though, of course, I lost my spirits, and gradually lost my health, I never lost heart. I never abandoned my faith in my ultimate destiny of escaping from my persecution. And I *have* escaped.

By means which I cannot at present reveal I left the asylum in which I was confined in the night and took the midnight train to New York City. With all its faults, New York is a free city, and I have found it so ; it has been a haven to me !

I reached its hospitable immensity early one morning, and felt at home from the moment my foot touched its stones. Its citizens have befriended me ; its lawyers have volunteered their services in my behalf ; its

judges have given me the protection of its courts ; and within its limits I have, at the date of this writing, resided, a sane and free man, for over six months. God bless New York !





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### H. T. HELMBOLD TO THE PUBLIC.—WHAT HE KNOWS ABOUT LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

**T**HROUGHOUT the series of personal adventures now concluding it will be noticed that I have not indulged in the usual “martyr’s license” of calling names. I have not thrown any more mud than I could help, and I have not feasted my readers on superfluous horrors. I have blamed nobody for anything; I have not described any particular madhouse in livid colors; I have not laid the blame of my sorrows on any set of men or women. So I do trust and hope that I will be believed when I do solemnly state that I do not think that I have ever been a whit more insane before I wrote these adventures than I have been since I commenced to write them.

I also hope and trust to be believed when I say that I have either been the victim of a very great mistake—on the part of the various persons who have been

instrumental in my repeated arrests and lockings-up, on the plea of insanity—or of a very foul conspiracy.

I do also hope, and expect to be believed when I state, that my fate contains a warning and a lesson. My experiences show how easily any man in America can be arrested on the pretence of lunacy; and, although I managed to escape from the madhouses “every time,” I would here earnestly caution any one from imagining that such escape is generally easy, or even generally possible, for it is *not*.

I am one of the very few men who have ever escaped from madhouses. As a rule it is as difficult to get out of them as it is easy to get into them; and even in my case the readers of this narrative will remember that I found escape often no trifle. I think I would now, looking back on the past from the stand-point of the present, rather die than reundergo the horrors of my last flight from a French madhouse, or repeat my experience in a “lock-up” at Long Branch.

As for the madhouses themselves, they are not in the true sense “asylums”; they are not “hospitals” nor “remedial establishments,” as they ought to be, in which the mentally afflicted can find rest and cure; they are simply “prisons,” in which “lunatics” are “punished” just as if they were criminals.

It may be this is the right theory on which to conduct an insane asylum; it may be that a man because he is mad deserves to be treated like a convict: it may

be that when a man is afflicted by Heaven with loss of reason he deserves the lot of a felon ; and if all this is so, then all I have got to say is that our madhouses answer every requisite, that our insane asylum system is perfection.

The food is generally scant, and wretchedly cooked, very poor and very little of it. I am speaking now of the American madhouses. The attendants are generally brutal, and almost always venal. You can persuade them to do almost anything for money, and you cannot persuade them, with rare exceptions, to do anything without it.

The punishments are excessively, needlessly severe ; and there is no regular code or system of punishments. Each lunatic is wholly at the mercy of his keeper, who can and does beat him, or kick him, or starve him, or terrify him, as he sees best. Patients have been beaten till they bled for merely remonstrating with their keepers. Victims have been kept in a dark cell for weeks simply for annoying their jailers in some frivolous way.

The medical attendance at some of the lunatic asylums is a mere farce, one doctor sometimes visiting over one hundred patients professionally, and "getting through" the hundred in a morning. No cases need so much professional skill and care as those which involve disease of the mind and brain, and none receive so little of either.

The physical exercise of the patients is seldom made a matter of any consideration.

In one asylum one hour a day—half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon—is all the open-air exercise permitted ; not one-third enough.

There are no recreations furnished, though no poor devils on the face of God's earth need recreation, pleasurable recreation, as do the insane.

There are no pursuits supplied the patients ; there is nothing to occupy healthfully their disordered intellects ; their sick minds are forced to prey upon themselves ; there is absolutely nothing else for them to do.

And if their days are horrible with *ennui*, their nights are still more terrible with torture—the twin torture of the loneliness and the dark. One half the time of a lunatic in an American madhouse is passed by himself in his dimly-lighted, badly-ventilated room or cell, where he is locked in, a prey to his own thoughts, if he has any.

If any of my readers have friends who are insane, for God's sake let them heed my words and take care of their insane dear ones themselves at home. Let them not send them to a madhouse. And if any of my readers fancy that they are perfectly secure, as far as they are concerned, from any possible danger of being thrown at any moment into a madhouse, let them think over the revelations published under my signature.

Having at last been pronounced by the authorities to be perfectly sane, and also having prosecuted and enjoined the persons who have been injuring me and pirating my trade-mark, I am again before the public, as energetic as ever, putting up my old goods, in partnership with my old and faithful employes.

Very respectfully.

H. T. HELMBOLD.





*Public*  
*Dr. T. Helmbold*

# AM I A LUNATIC?

OR,

Dr. Henry T. Helmbold's Exposure

OF HIS

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

IN THE

LUNATIC ASYLUMS

OF

EUROPE AND AMERICA.

*114932*

---

COPYRIGHT, 1877, BY H. T. HELMBOLD.

---









1000 2 1000 1000

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 00560523 2